

Turkish newspaper HQ bombed

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Unidentified attackers bombed the headquarters of the liberal Istanbul daily *Hürriyet* here early Sunday, causing minor damage but no casualties, the Anatolia news agency said. A bomb was hurled into the garden of the newspaper's offices on Istanbul's European side from a moving car at around 4:30 a.m., it said. Police were searching for two people in connection with the attack, for which the motive was not clear. *Hürriyet*, one of Turkey's three largest-selling newspapers, has been an outspoken critic of the policies of outgoing Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist-led government.

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King, Blair to meet Thursday in London

LONDON (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein will meet here next Thursday British Prime Minister Tony Blair to discuss the Middle East peace process and means of pushing it forward. King Hussein will also review with Mr. Blair bilateral relations.

Tarawneh discusses relations with Kuwait over phone

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh on Sunday called his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah and reviewed with him bilateral relations and inter-Arab affairs.

French woman found dead in Algeria

PARIS (R) — The body of a murdered French woman has been found in a well in the Algerian village of Bouzequene, 90 kilometres east of Algiers, an Algerian newspaper said Sunday. The 55-year-old woman, married to an Algerian, had regularly spent her holidays in the Berber village, said *Liberte* newspaper, quoting local residents. It said the woman was killed "some days ago." Her suspected murderer had been arrested as he was trying to flee to neighbouring Libya, said the newspaper.

Netanyahu forces top aides to take lie-detector tests

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Eight senior aides to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be forced to take lie-detector tests in coming days in a bid to find the source of recent press leaks, the Maariv newspaper reported Sunday. The newspaper, quoting persons targeted by the probe, said the tests were ordered by Avigdor Lieberman, Mr. Netanyahu's powerful chief of staff, after the contents of a letter written by the prime minister to a foreign leader were leaked to the media. One of the eight officials expressed indignation at the investigation, but several others agreed that it was necessary to plug the leaks, Maariv said. The Maariv did not say to which foreign leader the leaked letter was addressed but said Mr. Netanyahu had been furious over the incident.

Kuwaiti escapes gallows for 'honour killing'

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — An appeals court has commuted the death sentence of a man who murdered a fellow Kuwaiti with a machine-gun in what the defence said was an "honour killing," a newspaper reported Sunday. Mishal Enezi, 22, was sentenced to hang for shooting Nabil Khamees, 36, in October. But Saturday his sentence was commuted to 15 years in jail, the English-language Arab Times reported. Mishal's brother Talal, 17, who received a 10-year prison term in a March trial for his role, had his sentence cut to seven years. A three-year sentence for a third accomplice was upheld, the paper said. Defence lawyer Najeeb Wagyan said his clients were motivated by honour after Mishal found out about an affair between his sister and Khamees.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة نشرت بالوكالة من المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية للوكالة

PNA calls on U.N. to impose economic sanctions on Israel

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat dispatched a top lieutenant to U.N. headquarters in New York Sunday with a call for the world body to impose sanctions on Israel over its settlement policies, officials said.

Saeb Erekat, Mr. Arafat's chief negotiator with Israel, left for New York early Sunday bearing a letter from the Palestinian leader to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, the officials said.

Mr. Erekat will participate in a U.N. conference on the environment which is also expected to deal with Middle East peace and development issues.

Before leaving, Mr. Erekat said on Voice of Palestine Radio that he would "explain to the secretary general and other U.N. officials about Israeli violations" of signed peace agreements.

Friday night the leadership of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) autonomy government issued a call for the United Nations to "impose economic and political sanctions against Israel" for its violation of signed peace agreements and settlement expansion policy.

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have been stalled for more than three months over the issue of Israeli expansion of Jewish settle-

ments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Arafat has insisted Israel freeze settlement construction as a condition for renewed peace talks, including on a final status agreement for the occupied territories.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has refused, creating a stalemate which over the past two weeks has degenerated into daily rioting in Palestinian areas and clashes between protesters and Israeli troops.

The U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution on April 25 condemning Israeli settlement construction, especially the building of a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem which began in mid-March, sparking the current crisis.

The resolution gave Israel until June 25 to halt work on the Arab east Jerusalem settlement.

The world body was to have sent an envoy to Israel to check on its response to the resolution, but the mission was cancelled last week by U.N. officials who cited "restrictions imposed on the scope of the mission by the government of Israel (which) were not acceptable to the United Nations." Mr. Annan is due to report back to the General Assembly on the settlement issue by Wednesday.

Israeli armoured troops deployed around Hebron

HEBRON (AFP) — The Israeli army deployed armoured vehicles Saturday night around the volatile West Bank town of Hebron where clashes have been going on for eight days between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers. Palestinian sources said.

Tanks moved into position at the eastern entrance to the town where a contingent of Israeli troops remained behind after redeployment in January, to protect some 400 Jewish settlers living among the 120,000 Palestinian residents.

Other tanks were posted on a ring road used by the Israelis to reach the settle-

ment of Kiryat Arba near Hebron, the same sources said.

Local Palestinian officials said they feared the Israeli deployment could herald a blockade of Hebron where 170 Palestinians have been injured in the past eight days of clashes.

The clashes erupted after the failure of diplomatic efforts led by Egypt and the European Union, to revive talks between Israel and the Palestinians. The negotiations were suspended in March when Israel went ahead with a controversial plan to build a new Jewish settlement in traditionally Arab east Jerusalem.

Israel bars entrance of 20 PNA officials

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel is considering barring entrance to about 20 Palestinian officials it blames for inciting eight straight days of stone-throwing riots in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israeli radio said Sunday.

The list of officials who will not be allowed into the Jewish State includes three members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Radio added.

The radio also said that Justice Minister Freih Abu Medein, who has called for imposing the death penalty on Palestinians who sold land to Israelis, would also be banned from Israel.

David Bar-Ilan, top aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, denied that Israel had decided to bar Palestinian officials from Israel.

Shlomo Dror, spokesman for Israel's chief coordinator with the Palestinians, could not confirm the radio report but said Israel has the right to deny entry to Palestinian leaders who incite violence against Israelis or Palestinian land dealers.

"The United States and other Western countries also refuse to admit people whom they see as a security threat," Mr. Dror said.

Earlier this month, Israel revoked the entrance permit of Palestinian intelligence officer Tawfik Tirawi.

Israeli news reports said Colonel Tirawi was behind the murders of three land dealers and the attempted kidnapping of a fourth that followed Mr. Abu Medein's endorsement of the death penalty for Arabs selling property to Israelis.

Salah Tamari, one of the Palestinian lawmakers reportedly to be barred from Israel, said that if Mr. Netanyahu had kept the autonomy accord and opened the safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank he would not even have to enter the Jewish state.

"If the Israeli government respected the agreement we wouldn't even need a permit," Mr. Tamari said. "The VIP card is not a favour given to us by the Israeli government."

Israelis bombard Christian village in southern Lebanon

SIDON (AFP) — The Christian village of Maghdushay in southern Lebanon was bombed Saturday night for the first time, by shells fired from the Israeli-occupied zone, Lebanese police said Sunday.

Two 130 mm shells fired from Marjayoun, the headquarters of the Israeli army and its Lebanese proxy militia, fell on the village at about 10:30 p.m., the police said.

The village lies on a hill near Sidon, a few hundred metres from the main coast road.

Police mentioned no casualties among the 5,000 residents.

One shell fell in a garden without exploding. The other exploded in the house of Elias Morcos Saliba, the local priest who was not at home.

The attack came the day after a warning from General Antoine Lahad head of the pro-Israeli army of South Lebanon Army (SLA), that his forces would bombard the coast road if anti-Israeli forces targeted civilians in the Christian region of Jezzine which he controls.

Four people, including at least two SLA members, were killed Wednesday by the explosion of a remote-controlled device near Jezzine. The attack was claimed by the Islamic Resistance, the armed wing of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah movement.

A few moments before the attack on Maghdushay, the Islamic Resistance claimed a mortar attack on an SLA position at Sojoud in the central part of the occupied zone.

Maghdushay which was partly destroyed in the civil war of 1975 to 1990, had never been hit by an Israeli bombardment up to now. The Israelis generally target Shiite areas and villages along the edge of the "security zone" where Hizbollah has strong support.

Kadhafi denies assassination attempt

CAIRO (AP) — A leading Iraqi singer has denied a newspaper report that gunmen opened fire on his car as he travelled to Baghdad to perform in honour of Saddam Hussein's son. Iraq's Babil newspaper, which is owned by Saddam's son, Uday, reported Friday that gunmen opened fire on Kadhafi Saher's car as it travelled on the main highway linking Baghdad with Jordan. It said Mr. Saher was travelling to Baghdad to perform a concert to celebrate Uday's discharge from a hospital six months after gunmen shot him as he sat in a car in a posh Baghdad district. "I personally was not subjected to any incident," Mr. Saher said in a Saturday interview with the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Centre. Mr. Saher is close to Uday and Iraqi opposition groups have long accused him of collaborating with the regime.

Majali presents Jordan's investment attractions to UAE, offers labour skills

ABU DHABI (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Sunday delivered a message from His Majesty King Hussein to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, dealing with the Middle East peace process, current Arab issues and bilateral relations.

Dr. Majali delivered the Royal message during an audience with Sheikh Zayed attended by UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan Ben Zayed Al Nahayan, and senior UAE officials, in addition to members of the delegation accompanying Dr. Majali.

In a press statement after the meeting, Dr. Majali said his talks with Sheikh Zayed

fall within the context of consultation and contacts between the two countries on Arab and international issues of mutual interest at this crucial stage.

Dr. Majali stressed Jordan's support for Egypt's efforts to salvage the peace process, saying that Jordan is exerting every possible effort to establish peace, as a strategic Arab goal.

Sheikh Hamdan voiced hope that a just, lasting and durable peace be established in the region.

Earlier in the day, the two sides held a meeting at Al Mushref Palace, during which Dr. Majali presented investment opportunities in Jordan and the package of economic and investment laws that the government has enacted to attract for-

eign investments. Dr. Majali said Jordan is ready to meet UAE requirements of skilled and experienced labour.

Dr. Majali also held talks with Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khalifah Ben Zayed Al Nahayan and reviewed with him the latest developments in the region as well as bilateral relations between Jordan and the UAE.

Sheikh Khalifah stressed his country's support of Arab causes and securing Arab solidarity.

The meetings were attended by Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi, Central Bank of Jordan Governor Ziyad Fariz and Jordan's ambassador to UAE, Nabil Talhoum.

U.N. arms official meets Saddam's advisor after Security Council vote

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A senior U.N. weapons inspector met an advisor to President Saddam Hussein as the Security Council threatened new sanctions if Iraq continues to obstruct searches for banned arms, a U.N. official said Sunday.

A spokeswoman for the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) set up to disarm post-war Iraq said that Charles Duelfer, a U.S. national, held talks with a delegation headed by General Atter Saadi Saturday.

The meeting was "non-confrontational, and this is an achievement under the current circumstances," spokeswoman Jo Lomas said.

On Saturday, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution threatening unspecified new sanctions in four months unless Iraq officials comply with weapons inspectors.

The resolution underlined the council's "firm intention ... to impose additional measures on categories of Iraqi officials responsible for non-compliance."

The additional sanctions would only be imposed if UNSCOM reports to the

Security Council in October that Baghdad is still failing to cooperate with the arms inspectors.

The United States had pressed for an immediate international travel ban against Iraqi government and armed forces officials, but was forced to water down their demands after pressure from France and Russia.

The deal was only clinched after U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin spoke at the Denver, Colorado summit of leading industrialised nations. The resolution condemns the "repeated refusal of the Iraqi authorities" to allow weapons inspectors access to military sites, and calls on Baghdad to stop blocking U.N. requests to interview Iraqi officials.

It also provides for the suspension of the regular Security Council sanctions review, which takes place every two months, until after the next UNSCOM report on Iraqi disarmament which is due on October 11.

Under the terms of the ceasefire in the 1991 Gulf war, Iraq must grant unconditional access for the U.N.

inspectors in charge of eliminating its weapons of mass destruction since the conflict over Kuwait.

Iraq has been under a strict embargo since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The sanctions can only be lifted when UNSCOM certifies that Iraq has fully dismantled and accounted for all its banned weapons. Mr. Duelfer, who was at the U.N. monitoring centre in Baghdad Sunday, charged on arrival the previous day that Baghdad was still concealing proscribed weapons material.

"We are convinced there are prohibited things which Iraq is concealing," said Mr. Duelfer, the deputy chairman of UNSCOM. He said the United Nations was determined to press on with "intrusive" searches of Iraqi sites despite the friction it has caused with Baghdad, which accuses UNSCOM of spying on behalf of the United States. "Our problem is that we are convinced that there are prohibited things which Iraq is concealing, and so we have no choice but to go after those locations where we think they may be concealed," he said.

Turkish deputy resigns in support of anti-Islamic bloc

ANKARA (AP) — A deputy defected Sunday from an Islamic-led alliance to a pro-Western bloc under the premier-designate, but Mesut Yilmaz was still far short of the support he needs for a majority in parliament.

Haluk Mutluer, from Tansu Ciller's True Path Party, banded in his resignation a day after Mr. Yilmaz called on parties to join forces with his Motherland Party against the Islamic Welfare Party.

"We are expecting more defections (from True Path) in the coming days," Mr. Yilmaz told reporters Sunday, but refused to say how many.

Ms. Ciller's pro-Western party joined power through a coalition with Welfare leader Necmettin Erbakan, who stepped down as prime minister last week under pressure from the pro-secular military angered by his religious-oriented policies.

Mr. Mutluer was expected to officially join Motherland Monday, Mr. Yilmaz said. On her part, Ms. Ciller has

implied that the pro-secular Turkish army, which wants the Islamists out of a new government, played a role in averting her Islamist-backed premiership.

"The president, in an undemocratic way, has named Mesut Yilmaz prime minister, although I have the majority's support in parliament while Mr. Yilmaz lacks it," Ms. Ciller told reporters late Saturday.

"Has another power been giving orders to that end?" Ms. Ciller asked after a meeting with aides in her conservative True Path Party, according to the Turkish press.

Her remarks were a clear reference to army influence on politics, which forced the Islamist Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, to step down last week, ending a turbulent 12-month term.

But when Mr. Erbakan quit Wednesday, he said he would support Ms. Ciller's bid for the premiership in return for a pledge from her to continue the alliance with his pro-Islamist Welfare Party.

With the added support of an extreme rightist party, Ms. Ciller in theory commands the backing of a majority numbering around 280 deputies in the 550-seat parliament.

Mr. Erbakan had been hoping that Ms. Ciller could have led the coalition until early elections, possibly this fall, in a bid to appease the military.

But President Suleyman Demirel refused to approve the power-swap, which would have left Welfare with key cabinet posts. Instead he asked Mr. Yilmaz, a bitter, centre-right rival of Ms. Ciller, to try to form a government.

Mr. Yilmaz has the apparent backing of two social democratic parties and one small splinter party that broke away from True Path. He must try and win support from at least 10 more True Path deputies.

Mr. Yilmaz is to begin talks Tuesday with party leaders, including Ms. Ciller, who has spurned his overtures to join his bloc.

Sudan, Kuwait exchange letters amid signs of warming relations

'Relations with other Arab parties expected to be restored after ties with Jordan are renewed'

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Othman Mohammad Taha received a letter Sunday from Kuwait's acting premier amid signs of warming ties with countries accused by Kuwait of siding with Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war.

Kuwait's Charge d'Affaires in Khartoum Mohammad Al Nasser delivered the letter during a meeting with an official at Sudan's foreign min-

istry, the official Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) reported.

KUNA said it was a "normal letter" from acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah without giving the contents, but adding that it was in response to a recent communication from Mr. Taha.

Kuwait froze relations with Sudan, Jordan, Yemen, and the Palesti-

ans after accusing them of siding with Iraq following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion.

Sheikh Sabah said last week that normalisation with Arab countries "which adopted a pro-Iraqi stance will take place in the near future."

Diplomats said relations between Kuwait and Jordan have been improving, although full diplomatic ties are not expected to be restored immediately.

The diplomats said relations with the other Arab parties are expected to be restored after ties with Jordan are renewed.

Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) and Royal Jordanian are to restore direct flights that were stopped following the invasion in July, a KAC official said Sunday.

Kuwait has a charge d'affaires in Khartoum, but there is no Sudanese mission in Kuwait.



A Palestinian policeman on Sunday beats Palestinians with a club when fights broke out after a court hearing for nine Palestinians charged with killing seven Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel (Reuters photo)

S. Arabia following case of bombing suspect

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia said it was following the case of a Saudi suspect in the bombing that killed 19 U.S. airmen last June who was deported to the United States from Canada.

Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Prince Ahmad Bin Abdul Aziz told a news conference in Jeddah Saturday that Hani Sayegh was "a Saudi citizen and we are interested in any Saudi citizen wherever he is. The case of Sayegh...is of great importance to us in the kingdom and the issue is being followed."

Prince Ahmad, whose comments were carried by the official Saudi Press Agency early Sunday, did not elaborate nor did he say if Saudi Arabia was seeking access to Sayegh.

Sayegh — a Shiite Muslim described in Canadian court documents as a member of Saudi Hizbollah, or Party of God, a militant group backed by Iran — was deported Tuesday from Canada, where he was arrested in March on charges of posing a security risk.

On Wednesday, he was charged in Washington with conspiring to kill Americans and involvement in international terrorism. Sayegh has been identified in Canadian court documents as the driver of a car that flashed a go-ahead signal for the bomb-laden truck involved in the attack on Khobar Towers which killed 19 U.S. airmen on June 25 last year.

He has denied direct involvement in the bombing. U.S. court papers indicate Sayegh will plead guilty to conspiracy to commit murder in an earlier, abortive, anti-American plot in Saudi Arabia.

17-year-old Palestinian found slain in Arab east Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A 17-year-old Palestinian man was found slain in Arab east Jerusalem on Sunday, Israeli police said.

The youth, whose identity was not given, was "well-known to police for criminal activity," police spokeswoman Linda Menuchin said.

She said the body, bearing "signs of violence," was found early Sunday between the Arab neighborhood of Shuafat in

northern Arab east Jerusalem and the Jewish settlement of Pisgat Zeev.

The corpse was sent to a forensics institute for an autopsy, she said.

"The police are checking in all directions," she said, without elaborating.

Israeli police are still investigating the murders last month in the West Bank town of Ramallah of two Palestinians from Arab east Jerusalem who were allegedly slain for having handled sales of Arab land

to Jewish settlers.

The killings came after senior officials in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) announced that Palestinians who sold land to Jewish settlers would face the death penalty for treason.

Israel has issued an arrest warrant for a senior Palestinian security official from Ramallah in connection with the slayings, although the PNA has denied any role.

Palestinian delegation meets Iranian vice president

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Vice President Ayatollah Mohadjerani Sunday held talks with a delegation of Palestinian officials visiting Tehran, state radio reported.

The delegation — headed by the mayor of the West Bank town of Hebron, Mustapha Natsheh, and Sobhi Ghosheh, an official

from Jerusalem — presented a report on the situation in Jerusalem and Hebron.

Members of the delegation paid tribute to Iran's position on the Middle East peace process, and predicted the Palestinians would obtain their objectives with the help of countries in the region, said the radio.

Ayatollah Mohadjerani, who is chairman of an Iranian Islamic committee set up to support the Palestinians, said: "Iran gives great importance to the destiny of Jerusalem, the heart of the Islamic World."

The 'Palestinians are attending a three-day mayoral conference of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani sharply criticised Saturday a U.S. House of Representatives vote recognising Jerusalem as Israel's unified capital, saying it was an insult to the Muslim World.

"It is regrettable that we are deprived of our dearest pilgrimage site," the presi-

dent added, urging Muslim countries to "react forcefully" to the resolution passed earlier this month.

The non-binding U.S. resolution passed on June 10 recognised Jerusalem as the "united capital" of Israel and set aside \$100 million to move the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv.

Sudan opposition leaders hold talks

ASMARA (R) — Sudanese opposition leaders fighting the government in Khartoum have concluded a three-day meeting in the Eritrean capital Asmara, a spokesman said Sunday.

An opposition Umma Party spokesman said details of the talks would be revealed later and declined to comment on speculation that the Sudanese groups had discussed ways of intensifying their campaign against the Khartoum government.

The meeting, which started Thursday, was attended by senior officials of the Sudanese opposition groups — including the Democratic Unionist Party's Moulana Mirghani, the Sudan People's Liberation Army's (SPLA) John Garang, Umma's Mubarak Mahdi, and the Sudanese Alliance Forces' Abdul Aziz Khalid.

Former Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Mahdi, who escaped from Khartoum in December, was also present, sitting as a member of the rebel

National Democratic Alliance (NDA), according to NDA officials.

The last NDA meeting was held in Asmara, where the NDA has its headquarters, in March. At that time Mr. Mahdi's position in the opposition had not yet been decided, and he was not formally a member of the NDA.

The NDA launched attacks into Sudan from Eritrea in January, initially capturing several towns and prompting Sudan to order a general mobilisation which halted the rebel advance.

Further south, the SPLA has intensified a war which has been going on since 1983, capturing a string of key centres and threatening the main southern town, Juba, which is in government hands.

The SPLA is fighting for greater autonomy or independence for the Christian or animist south from the Muslim and Arab north. The NDA says it aims to trigger an uprising in Khartoum against the fundamentalist regime there.

Kuwait clamps down on sea speedsters

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Since Kuwaiti authorities started to clamp down on the speedy but potentially lethal craft, Basil Ali has grown more cautious about renting the jet skis parked around his beach camp.

Entrepreneurs like Basil offer mainly young and often speed-crazy Kuwaitis the chance to skim over the waves, dodging swimmers and other beach-goers trying to cool off from the searing summer sun.

But the authorities are striking back with a list of regulations to rein in the wayward speed machines which officials say caused some 30 accidents last summer, resulting in smashed bones, big cuts and at least one fatality.

"This year we've had accidents, but not deaths, thank God," said Basil, 28, the owner of 10 jet skis — or jet bikes — which join the clutter of sunshades, fuel cans and

drinks coolers to make up his hire business.

To the casual observer on the capital's beach front it's a wonder more people have not met an untimely end as Kuwaiti youths zoom up and down the shoreline, spinning their craft and swamping swimmers in a plume of spray.

"They come so fast, so near to the beach... we have so many accidents," complained one exasperated coast guard.

The latest jet skis with engines of more than 100 horsepower can blast their riders to speeds of 45 knots or more. "How can you control yourself at that speed on the sea?" the coast guard sighed.

A tourist company which runs several beaches around Kuwait City where jet skiers crowd to perform their water acrobatics began cordoning off areas of the beach for swimmers last year.

But jet skiers quickly discovered that the strings of buoys form excellent obstacles to leap over or weave between.

Now, the law has intervened. Every jet ski must be licensed, riders must be over 18 and jet skiers must travel sedately until they are 200 metres from the shore.

"We need this law. There have been so many complaints. The jet skis are dangerous for everyone, especially kids swimming," said Jamal Ahmadi of the marine affairs department.

Kuwait shares its concerns with some fellow Gulf states, and water users worldwide, pressing for curbs on this increasingly popular, but potentially dangerous sport.

Mr. Ahmadi and a team of some 30 other registered inspectors from the ministry now patrol popular Kuwaiti beaches, handing down heavy fines to miscreants.

The fines include up to 300 dinars for not wearing a life vest or speeding too close to shore, and up to 1,000 dinars for failing to licence a craft.

Mr. Ahmadi has been filling up a file with bookings since the law came into force in June, but catching violators is not so easy even with the help of the coast guard, whose thundering powerboats are no match for nippy jet skiers.

"The trouble is, there isn't enough inspection," said Basil, as he watched another jet skier buzz by a swimmer next to the beach.

Basil now makes customers sign an agreement so they can be traced if they do break the laws.

And he even takes the law into his own hands: "If I see dangerous driving, I bring them straight in, and they don't get their money back, even if they've not finished their time."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

3:30 Holy Koran

3:40 Sprou

4:05 Neighbours

4:30 Doc. — In The Wild

5:00 Tilt

5:30 Blue Heelers

6:10 French Programmes

7:00 News in French

7:30 News Headline

7:35 Doc. — Murphy Brown

8:00 Discover Magazine

8:30 Murder She Wrote

9:10 Highlander

10:00 News in English

10:35 The Wright Verdict

11:15 Homieside

PRAYER TIMES

03:51 Fajr

05:26 (Sunrise) Doha

12:38 Dhuh

16:18 'Asr

19:49 Maghreb

21:24 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 63785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

The weather will be relatively hot Monday and Tuesday with temperatures above their seasonal average. In Aqaba, it will be very hot and winds northerly moderate and seas will be calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman 22/34

Aqaba 26/41

Deserts 21/38

Jordan Valley 24/40

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 37, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent, Aqaba 24 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Fayed Dabbas 759155

Dr. Adnan Zaghloul 898140

Dr. Fakher Bileid 5522233

Dr. Mazen Nballi 830435

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Aserna pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Zahur Al Qadi 906606

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Fire Brigade 192, 621111, 637777

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Dept. 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 897457

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

J. Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Co. 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity 64281/6

Akileh Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Abli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)27275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:05 Sanaa (RJ)

08:05 Damascus (RJ)

09:30 Jeddah (RJ)

09:45 New Delhi (RJ)

10:20 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:25 Beirut (RJ)

17:15 Beirut (RJ)

17:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

18:55 London, Milan (RJ)

23:20 Casablanca (RJ)

01:45 Jakarta, Bangkok (RJ)

03:15 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

03:50 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights



HRH Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan Sunday presents diplomas to students graduating from the Princess Rahma College for Social Work. Addressing a special ceremony held at the college to confer certificates upon 81 students graduating in social work and special education, Princess Rahma called for empowering future generations to interact with other world cultures. She stressed the importance of educational counselling for developing future generations. The Princess also presented awards to excellent students (Petra photo)

Jordan, Kuwait agree to resume direct flights after six-year hiatus

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Kuwait have agreed to resume direct flights between Amman and Kuwait City in the middle of next month, following a hiatus of six years.

Senior officials from Royal Jordanian (RJ) and the Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) released a joint statement of confirmation to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, at the conclusion of meetings between the two, held in Amman.

RJ Vice President for Commercial Affairs Majdi Sabri stated that both RJ and KAC will operate semi-weekly flights to Amman and Kuwait. However, the two sides will further coordinate to increase the number of flights in the light of popular demand for air travel between the two countries, he affirmed.

The two airlines are to submit a schedule of their respective flights for

the approval of civil aviation authorities in Kuwait and Jordan before a date for the first flights can be announced, Dr. Sabri added.

Noting that a KAC technical team is due in Amman to finalise technical details related to the agreement, Dr. Sabri confirmed that the two sides will convene in September or October in order to assess the resumption of flights and take appropriate measures to further promote links.

The two airlines had suspended flights following the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, however in a closed session Saturday the Kuwaiti parliament discussed the possibility of normalising ties with Arab states which appeared to side with Iraq during the Gulf crisis.

Kuwait has yet to restore full diplomatic ties with Jordan which had been seen as sympathising with Iraq during

the Gulf War.

Describing talks between RJ and KAC as cordial and brotherly, Dr. Sabri announced that the new director, as yet unnamed, of RJ's Kuwait office, will fly to Kuwait to assume his post as soon as deemed feasible.

KAC Director of Marketing and Sales Brak Abdul Muhsen Subeih described the resumption of flights as aiding Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations.

Contacts between the two airlines were not disrupted over the past six years, Mr. Subeih stated, and channels of communication remained open.

The two airlines are invested in developing ties in the interest of the Kuwaiti and Jordanian people, he added.

The four-member Kuwaiti delegation is due to return home today.

Regent meets with Thai delegation

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein the Regent Sunday expressed Jordan's willingness to provide all possible facilities and services to encourage foreign investment in the Kingdom.

In a meeting held at the Royal Court with a visiting Thai delegation, led by former Thai Minister and President of the Thai Global Holding Company Kim Watna, Prince Abdullah reviewed investment possibilities in the Kingdom.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji as well as the Thai delegation.

Earlier, Dr. Watna met with Mr. Biltaji to review areas considered amenable to investment and visited a number of tourist sites in Jordan.

He described Thai investors as demonstrating interest in launching tourist plans in Jordan as, he stated, many investment opportunities exist and because the Kingdom is committed to the achievement of peace and stability.

Thai firms have been studying prospects for launching tourist investment projects in the Jordan Rift Valley and in various free trade zones, notably in Aqaba which is slated to be transformed into a free trade city.

The Thai delegation had earlier visited the Investment Promotion Corporation and met with officials who explained both Jordanian regulations aimed at encouraging investments and the facilities, privileges and exemptions offered to foreign investors.

The six-member Thai delegation also visited the Amman Chamber of Commerce and met with Chairman Haidar Murad to discuss trade and economic relations.

Mr. Murad requested that Thailand increase imports from Jordan and help adjust the balance of trade which currently favours Thailand.

The delegation is touring Arab and European countries as well as the Palestinian self-rule areas. Its members represent more than 20 firms in Thailand specialising in tourism and including representatives of industrial and agricultural sectors.

Members of the delegation arrived last Friday at the invitation of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Professional association presidents not to resign

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The presidents of professional associations, late Saturday, decided not to resign in protest of recent amendments introduced to the Press and Publications Law.

Chairperson of the Professional Associations Abdul Rahman Issa told the Jordan Times that "as a result of appeals issued by all the general assemblies of the associations, opposition deputies, and the Union of Arab Federations, we have decided to resume our responsibilities."

The move does not mean that the associations will stop supporting journalists, he said, but rather that it is important at this stage to follow up on respective responsibilities.

The presidents of the professional associations took a unified decision on May 21 to submit their resignations, barring an official withdrawal of the new amendments.

However, as a result of a meeting, the association presidents, decided not to submit their resignations.

"It is not a strategic decision, but more of a tactic," according to Jordan Medical Association (JMA) President Bassem Dajani.

Dr. Dajani added that the Jordan Press Association (JPA) is currently negotiating with the government and therefore the presidents decided not to resign.

In a recent interview with the Jordan Times, Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid reminded the professional association that the Constitution stipulates that only labour unions are legally permitted to form and operate in Jordan.

Meanwhile, a committee representing the professional association will soon file a case in the Higher Court of Justice, protesting the amendments to the Press and Publications Law.

"We will have recourse to the Court as another means to pressure the government," Dr. Dajani said.

On another front, representatives of professional associations, opposition parties, unions and women and youth organisations, late Saturday issued a statement denouncing the amended Press and Publications Law as contradicting with freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution and thereby annulling democratic gains reached since the lifting of martial law in 1990.

These gains, the statement said, had enabled the press to accomplish a national task.

The statement also decried the amended Law as having been introduced for political reasons and in deference to the upcoming elections scheduled for November.

These representatives, meeting at the Islamic Action Front offices, held the government responsible for issuing the amendments and they demanded that Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali withdraw the disputed legislation.

They also resolved to instigate a peaceful march next Friday as well as call for holding a national conference to "defend Jordan's democracy."

Those involved then appointed a follow-up committee to organise the conference and prepare for the issuance of a national popular charter and a national democratic programme.

They also intend to hold similar meeting in the different cities in preparation for a general popular meeting.

Two weeks ago, His Majesty King Hussein stated that "amendments to the (Press and Publication) Law were made after a due study of the situation, we have ratified them and we are not going back on our signatures and we will not rescind our decision."

Overtime allowances accepted with reservation

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Although angered by a recent government decision to introduce overtime allowances to public health employees as of June, rather than a retroactive period dating from January 1, professional associations will accept the Cabinet decision as a step in the right direction, according to President of the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) Bassem Dajani.

Dr. Dajani told the Jordan Times that "we were informed by the Minister [of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi] that the allocation of retroactive allowances is prohibited by law."

"However, this [decision] does not mean that we will overlook the rest of our demands."

Last month, the professional associations, anticipating the government decision, pre-emptively rejected such and threatened to hold a general strike.

They described the decision as a breach of the memorandum of understanding signed between the professional associations and the government in October of last year.

The memorandum stipulated that an increase in overtime allowances for public health employees would be introduced as of January 1997 rather than June 1. But subsequent to a meeting with Dr. Kurdi, the public health associations became convinced that they would not receive their overtime allowances as of January.

The Cabinet decision increases overtime allowances for doctors, dentists and veterinarians from 30 to 60 per cent, pharmacists from 90 to 100 per cent and nurses will receive a 75 per cent overtime allowance up from 50.

Yet the presidents of the association remain unappeased. They have requested that the government, as a second stage, raise nurses' overtime allowances from the anticipated 75 per cent to 90 per cent and to grant journalists a 90 per cent overtime allowance as well as granting other associations, veterinarians, agricultural engineers, pharmacists and geologists a 120 per cent overtime allowance increase as of January of next year.

According to Dr. Dajani, the JMA is anxious that the government "correct the injustices of the Unified Allowances Law passed in 1988. The law actually withdrew benefits and reduced the income of doctors and other professionals."

He added that the increase was based on the basic salary and not the total salary, which in the case of a newly appointed doctor, could be 500 fils per each working hour as overtime.

"The overtime allowances are less than that which a doctor receives during regular hours," he lamented.

The JMA has also solicited an increase on the basic salary of public health doctors in order to raise retirement wages, currently calculated according to the basic salary.

"The major bulk of public health doctors' salaries are [contained in] allowances while retirement pensions are based on the basic salary," he explained.

Women protest against transfer of U.S. embassy

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Representatives of Jordanian and Palestinian women's associations Sunday staged a sit-in near the U.S. embassy in Amman and delivered a letter therein to protest that country's recent decision to transfer the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Over 30 women participated in the demonstration.

"The [U.S.] Congress has no right to make such a decision," according to Asma Khader, one of the protesters and a noted women's activist. "Palestine does not belong to it and Jerusalem does not belong to it."

"The decision runs contrary to international legitimacy, contradicts international law and unveils the reality of the peace process which is not aimed at preserving peace and security for all peoples in the region but rather aims only at securing the interest of Israel," Ms. Khader stated.

During the two-hour sit-in, participants carried Palestinian flags, banners and placards which read "No on the Congress' decision," "Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine," and "The Congress' decision is a declaration of war."

Representatives of the demonstrators issued a letter to Steve Thibault, the U.S. embassy press attaché, to protest the decision.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Congress adopted a resolution which stipulated the transfer of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and allocated

\$100 million to cover incurred expenses.

The decision drew a chorus of denunciation from Arab and Muslim countries as well as criticism from the White House.

Palestinians believe that the decision would undermine their request that east Jerusalem be named capital of a projected state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel and the Palestinians are scheduled to discuss the fate of the Holy City during their talks on the permanent status of the Palestinian territories.

"Jerusalem is part of the final negotiations. Congress' decision is premature... this means that the Palestinian negotiator will [be prevented from covering the issue of Jerusalem]," according to Laila Khalid, a political activist and a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Ms. Khalid told the Jordan Times that "by this decision... the United States is placing a time bomb in the region... The U.S. Congress was elected to run the affairs of the American people and not to [interfere] in Palestinian affairs."

The sit-in formed part of widespread Jordanian disapproval of the decision. During his visit to the United States last week, HRH Crown Prince Hassan denounced the resolution and called for its review.

Opposition describes petition as 'demonstrative act'

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Opposition deputies described their petition for an extraordinary Parliament session to discuss the recent amendments to the press and publications and electoral laws as a "demonstrative act."

The petition, signed by 27 of the 80 members in the House and submitted two days ago, did not fulfil the minimum constitutional requirement of 41 signatures to be accepted, therefore the petitioners do not expect any answer from Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour, one of the signatories told the Jordan Times.

"We did not succeed in collecting the minimum constitutional requirement of half plus one signatures," leftist Deputy Bassam Haddadin (Zarga) said. "Therefore our request will not be taken into consideration."

However, "as opposition deputies, we felt it was our duty to make at least a demonstrative act," Amman Ba'athist Deputy Khalil Haddadin told the Jordan Times.

Amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law, introduced by Royal Decree in May, and strongly condemned by international press freedom groups, increased the number of issues forbidden to be reported, stipulated much higher fines for violations of the law, and empowered the courts to suspend publication of any paper found to be transgressing the law.

Amendments to the 1993 electoral law, which introduced the controversial one-person, one-vote system, fell short of the opposition's expectations, too. After a four-year national debate, in which progressive academics and politicians, as well as Islamists, proposed the abolition of religious and ethnic quotas, lowering the voting age from 19 to 18, and the allocation of seats according to density of population, the mid-May Royal Decree introduced only minor administrative adjustments to the previous election law.

Three former districts were promoted to the rank of constituencies, (Madaba, Jerash and Ajloun), while the previous Ma'an constituency was split into two, (Ma'an and Aqaba), but the number of seats allocated for each of them remained unchanged.

Describing, in their petition, the two temporary laws as "detrimental to the country and the people's well-being," the 27 opposition deputies called for their document "to be published, according to the Constitution, by the legislative authority, as the Parliament is still in office, though it is in recess."

Twelve out of the 15 Islamic Action Front (IAF) Lower House deputies signed the petition.

Among the other signatories, are the 12th Parliament's only female deputy, Toujan Faisal, and members of the parliamentary progressive democratic coalition headed by former Prime Minister Taher Masi.

CRPD to release updated passports

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Civil Registration and Passports Department (CRPD) is to release new passports which better comply with accepted international standards, according to CRPD Director Awni Yarfes.

The decision will be effected by the end of this year, he stated.

In a Sunday interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Yarfes described the new edition, set by the International Air Transport Association, as combining the original first three pages into one and decreasing the number of available pages from 60 to 48.

The new passport edition will be similar to the old one — the dark green cover and the Kingdom's emblem will remain as will the combination of the first three

pages which include the national number, holder's full name, date and place of birth and mother's name, according to Mr. Yarfes.

"The date and place of passport issuance and expiration will be the only [substantive] change," he added.

In reference to temporary passports, issued for humanitarian and private cases and independent of citizenship status, Mr. Yarfes described these as unaffected by any change.

"New changes were also implemented on 86,000 identification cards issued from May 26 to June 15," Mr. Yarfes affirmed.

The new identification cards have been issued in accordance with higher standards as the old paper cards were easily forged, he explained.

Mr. Yarfes added that the cards, now possessing

secret codes, must be obtained by all citizens above 16 years of age upon the expiration of their current cards.

"We decided to discontinue the category of occupation in the new cards as there is no international law [which stipulates such a classification]," Mr. Yarfes said. "Each card is valid for ten years and jobs are often changed within such a period."

The new identification cards, however, cannot be used to vote for parliamentary elections precisely because they make no mention of the occupation of the holder.

"As military personnel do not vote, and the new cards do not describe occupation, these cards are not valid for voters in parliamentary elections," Mr. Yarfes concluded.

Summer camp plans announced

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education has announced plans for public school students from the governorates of Balqa, Tafleh and Irbid to participate in summer camps.

Head of the Ministry of Education Extra-Curricular Activities Department Shauqi Abdullat confirmed that arrangements have been made for 300 students from the three governorates to participate in summer camps and volunteer for local community work.

Students will be helping with the upkeep of archaeological sites in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, he added.

The ministry has prepared another plan for 79 July summer clubs in which 10,500 students are to participate from around the Kingdom, according to Mr. Abdullat.

These club activities will instruct participants in handicrafts, reading, computer training, knitting and sewing as well as artificial flower arrangements, embroidery, sports and other recreational activities, according to Mr. Abdullat.

What's Going On

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| <p>FILM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Une Histoire Simple" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 8:30 p.m. <p>PLAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Hospital of Happy Dreams" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. <p>SLIDE LECTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Shedding Light on the Development of Calligraphy throughout the Ages: Recent Discoveries in the Area of Ma'raq" by Dr. Abdul Qader Al Hosan at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 696682) | <p>EXHIBITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Works by Naimat Al Naser at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until June 30. * Paintings by contemporary Iraqi artists entitled "Ecology and Environment in Iraqi Art" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until July 12 (except Tuesdays). * Spring Exhibition of Plastic Art '97 at Greater Amman Municipality, Ras Al Ain, until June 30. * "One-of-a-Kind" artists' book exhibit at the American Centre, Abdoun, until June 25. |
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Save water... every drop counts!

New Hong Kong leader takes firm line on protests

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's future chief executive, Tung Chee-Hwa, made clear Sunday that new laws restricting demonstrations would have effect from the minute the territory becomes part of China on July 1.

But it was still uncertain how the new Special Administrative Region (SAR) government would handle its first challenge by pro-democracy forces, expected soon after midnight.

Martin Lee and other democracy activists have said they would denounce the new Beijing-appointed legislature from the outside balcony of the Chamber while members were being sworn in to pass new laws, several of which will curb existing liberties.

"Laws passed during the early morning of the first of July will take effect as of the beginning of that particular day," Mr. Tung told a news conference.

There has been debate over whether a legal vacuum would exist in the several hours between the midnight handover of Hong Kong by Britain and the passage of new laws.

But Mr. Tung insisted that new legislation would be retroactive, covering the

gap. "I don't think it is ridiculous," he told a questioner. "That's the way we're going to go ahead."

"There will be people who want to express their views in different ways through demonstrations and so on and so forth," Mr. Tung said. "So long as they're lawful, so long as they're quiet and peaceful, they will be fine."

He added that Chinese people all over the world would celebrate the handover after 156 years of British rule. "Nothing will spoil the happiness of that occasion."

Mr. Tung did not say whether Mr. Lee's demonstration would be acceptable. Talks between his office and Mr. Lee's Democratic Party were continuing, he said.

Future Secretary of Justice Elsie Leung has warned that pro-democracy activists faced prosecution if they defied the laws giving police powers to control protests.

On Saturday, Democratic Party member Lee Wing-Tat said full details of his party's planned protest had been passed to Mr. Tung's office and "this time we got a more positive response."

raising the prospect of a compromise.

Democratic Party members dominate the current democratically elected legislature, which will be dissolved at midnight on June 30 and replaced by a body formed by Beijing.

They plan to peacefully invade the colonial-style building in the heart of the central business district and make protest speeches from a colonnaded balcony overlooking a stone memorial to Hong Kong's war dead.

Under an amendment to the existing public order ordinance, demonstrations of more than 30 people will need a police permit.

The protest is just one of several planned immediately following the handover ceremony by civic groups and political organisations that Beijing has denounced as subversive.

With an estimated 8,000 foreign journalists attending handover celebrations, world attention will be focused on the protests for signs of how Mr. Tung, a shipping magnate appointed by Beijing as chief executive, will handle dissent.

At stake is the credibility of the SAR government and, crucially, relations between Beijing and Washington, which has emphasised its concern about any erosion of civil liberties in Hong Kong under Chinese rule.

Mr. Tung said he was disappointed that U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and new British Prime Minister Tony Blair would skip the swearing-in ceremony for new lawmakers. But he dismissed suggestions that this was a blow to the credibility of the new government.

"Obviously, I'm disappointed if some of the visiting dignitaries decided not to attend the swearing-in ceremony for one reason or another," he said. "The credibility of this government will be high."

Mr. Tung also said it was likely he would meet Mr. Blair to discuss the post-handover administration. The handover has severely strained ties between Britain and China.

"I will stress that good Sino-British relations are important to the future development of Hong Kong," he said, adding that he hoped Mr. Blair's new Labour Party government would achieve a "breakthrough" in relations.

Japanese have mixed views about Russia's deprogramming of missiles

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese military experts expressed mixed views in debating the significance of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's announcement last week that Japan was no longer a target of Russian missiles.

Local newspapers said Sunday that many experts saw Mr. Yeltsin's announcement to Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in Denver, Colorado, as having only "symbolic" meaning as missile targets can be shifted in a matter of a few minutes.

"Russia probably used it as a tool to distract Mr. Hashimoto's attention from a bilateral territorial dispute," military commenta-

tor Kensuke Ebata told the Tokyo Shimbun.

Japan and Russia have yet to conclude a bilateral peace treaty due to a territorial dispute over the Russian-held Southern Kuril Islands, occupied by the Red Army in 1945 and over which Japan wants to restore sovereignty.

But Manjo Kamiya, assistant professor at National Defence Academy, argued that the Russian move cannot be underestimated.

"In a scenario of a nuclear war, a minute is long enough to change the winner," Mr. Kamiya told the Yomiuri Shimbun.

"Also, at a time when no countries believe the use of nuclear weapons is realistic,

something that looks symbolic can have a substantial meaning," he reportedly said.

According to Japanese spokesman Kaoru Yosano, Mr. Yeltsin told Mr. Hashimoto Friday that Russia would either "deprogramme missiles from being targeted" at Japan or confirm that they have already been deprogrammed.

Defence Academy's Prof. Kamiya also said Mr. Yeltsin's open support at the Summit of the Eight to Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council was "a strong message" showing its desire to improve bilateral ties with Japan.

U.S. forces in Okinawa look set to remain for many years

NAHA (AFP) — Despite protests over their presence, U.S. bases on the Japanese island of Okinawa look set to remain for many years as the heart of the American military in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Okinawa is called the keystone of the Pacific because of its strategic location," said Senior Master Sergeant Charles Denney, during a recent tour of the U.S. Kadena Air Base organised for foreign media in Japan.

Geographically, Japan's southernmost prefecture of Okinawa, located 1,500 kilometres from Tokyo, is at the center of the Orient. The bases on the island played a major role during the Vietnam War and, more recently, in the 1991-92 Gulf War.

In the event of conflict with North Korea, the 35,000 U.S. soldiers in South Korea would be the frontline forces, but the Okinawa bases would provide crucial support for reconnaissance, air cover and resupply.

The Chinese coast is less than 1,000 kilometres from Okinawa, and China's military buildup has sparked fears in Japan and other countries in the region. Taiwan, considered a flashpoint in the region because of its rivalry with Beijing, is only 600 kilometres away.

Also nearby are the Spratly Islands, another flashpoint claimed in whole or in part by Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

The islands, about one hour flying time for the F-15 fighters the United States keeps on Okinawa, are on

strategic maritime routes from both Japan and South Korea.

"There are 22 potential trouble spots in the Pacific," said Kevin Krejcarek, spokesman for the U.S. forces in Japan.

But while U.S. forces are seen by many countries as a stabilising force in the region, many Okinawans hold a different view, Lieutenant Colonel Krejcarek acknowledged.

"Many Okinawans understandably resent our military presence," he said.

"Okinawan people always said they want a total withdrawal of all U.S. forces. This is not possible at the moment."

Col. Krejcarek recalled the historic element of this opposition: "Their bitter experience during World War II."

The Battle of Okinawa in 1945 took the lives of 250,000 Japanese and 15,000 Americans. One-third of Okinawa's civilian population perished during the 82-day battle that was a prelude to Japan's surrender.

Placed under U.S. administration, the island continued to be a bastion for American bases even after it was returned to Japanese rule in 1972.

The rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl by three U.S. soldiers in 1995 exacerbated the local hostility toward the local hostility toward the Americans. In September 1996, a year after the rape, 89 per cent of voters in a referendum organised by Governor Masahide Ota favoured a reduction of the U.S. bases on the island.

"Okinawa is not the territory of the United States,"

Mr. Ota said in an interview with a group of foreign journalists. "It is a question of sovereignty that we can use our land freely."

The governor's popularity has increased since he asked for the departure of the bases. Supported by a minority of landlords whose property is used by the bases against their will, Mr. Ota has called for a progressive but complete withdrawal of the bases by 2015.

Seeking to appease the opposition, Tokyo and Washington announced in December they would return 20 per cent of the installations to local use. But President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto insisted at the same time there would be no reduction in operational capacity or the number of soldiers on Okinawa or in Asia.

The Americans are also trying to reduce the impact of their presence on the Okinawans. At the Kadena Base, they have constructed anti-noise baffles and the maintenance of jet engines now takes place in special noise-reducing buildings.

Flight paths have been reconfigured to avoid populated areas.

Steps have also been taken to avoid incidents between the soldiers and locals. The drinking age on the bases has been raised from 18 to 20, and soldiers are not allowed in bars between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.

Crimean leftists protest NATO expansion, manoeuvres

SIMFEROPOL (AFP) — About 500 Leftists demonstrated Sunday in Simferopol, capital of Ukraine's Crimea region, against NATO expansion and the alliance's naval exercises to be carried out in the Black Sea.

The demonstrators, from the Crimean Communist Party and the Union of Soviet Officers, issued a resolution calling for countries taking part in the exercises in August "to stop and think before sending sailors to another land."

The demonstrators, who carried Soviet flags, also called on Ukraine not to take part and warned they would stage peaceful demonstrations in areas where troops were meant to land during the Sea Breeze 97 NATO exercises.

Communist leader Leonid Grach said similar protests were taking place in the Crimean cities of Sevastopol, Kerch and Feodosia.

Soviet officers leader Alexei Usoltsev said: "We are starting a cold war against the Ukrainian leadership."

Crimea was a part of Russia until being handed over to Ukraine in 1954. It remains populated by a majority of ethnic Russians and has threatened to secede from Ukraine to reunite with Russia, something openly supported by nationalist Russian politicians.

Earlier this month the local Crimean Parliament also passed a resolution opposing the naval exercises and condemning closer ties between Kiev and the Atlantic alliance.

The exercises are part of NATO's Partnership For Peace Programme, and will simulate the evacuation of diplomats and civilians during a conflict, a Western diplomat in Kiev said.

Eight Ukrainian warships will take part along with two from the United States, one each from NATO members Turkey and Italy, plus one each from Bulgaria and Romania.

Moscow, which opposes any expansion of NATO into former Soviet republics, has branded the manoeuvres anti-Russian.



Supporters of Albania's opposition Socialist Party shout slogans during a pre-election rally in the town of Kruje, some 35 kilometres north of Tirana Saturday. Albania will hold its third free elections on June 29 after a month-long campaign marked by political tension and violence (Reuters photo)

Crime is on the upswing in Taleban-controlled Kabul

KABUL (R) — Crime is on the rise in Kabul, nine months after the purist Islamic Taleban militia rolled into the Afghan capital promising harsh punishment for law-breakers.

Residents and aid workers say there has been a surge in looting and armed robbery in the past two weeks, along with reports of harassment of ethnic minority groups associated with opposition to the mainly ethnic Pashtun Taleban.

One target has been Kabul's money-changing bazaar, where at least two currency dealers have been robbed recently.

"Armed men pushed into their car a young man believed to have a bag full of 1.2 million Pakistani rupees (\$30,000) in broad daylight," said a money trader, who asked not to be named.

He said the victim was a currency dealer from Kabul and had not reappeared since his abduction 10 days earlier.

Another Kabul resident said a money dealer friend of his had been relieved of his cash at gunpoint.

"Three people with Kalashnikovs took him from the crowded part of the market pretending they wanted to change money. They threw pepper into his eyes and snatched his money," he said.

When the Taleban warriors swept into Kabul, many of its war-weary citizens were surprised at the relative restraint and discipline they showed towards ordinary people.

The Taleban, who accuse the ousted government led by then President Burhanuddin Rabbani of plundering national assets, indulged in no rape or widespread looting in the captured city.

Their well-publicised announcements of strict Islamic Sharia Law brought about a dramatic improvement in security.

The Sunni Muslim Taleban militants, many of whom were educated in Koranic schools for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, warned that they would mete out the death penalty for murder, amputation for theft and stoning for adultery.

In the first months after they took Kabul on Sept. 27, the Taleban arrested hundreds of people for alleged theft and sex crimes, blackening their faces and parading them on the streets, but not actually carrying out the threatened penalties.

Whatever they thought of the Taleban's style, Kabul residents enjoyed a degree of security that had been rare during the five-year rule by unruly Mujahadeen guerrilla factions.

Now they exchange tales of armed men in pickup trucks with tinted windows roaming the city for wealthy people to rob and smart vehicles to steal, apparently unchecked by the Taleban.

"It's deteriorating," said one resident. "Nobody has

taken any responsibility to stop these robberies by day and night."

Foreign aid workers have also noted the security slip-slide.

"Law and order enforcement levels appear to have declined in Kabul with the exodus of many Taleban fighters to the areas to the north of the city," said a weekly United Nations report.

"There are reports of an upsurge in criminal activity and a degree of inter-ethnic tension," it said. "Numerous reports have come in of military movements through Kabul as the Taleban reinforce and support positions in the north."

The Taleban have come under military pressure in the past month from opposition factions who first drove the militia from the northern capital of Mazar-i-Sharif and then cut off another Taleban force in the north by closing the Salang Pass.

Travellers arriving from Kabul in neighbouring Pakistan say the Taleban have been arresting members of the mainly Shiite Muslim ethnic Hazara group travelling from the southern city of Kandahar towards Hazara-dominated areas in central Afghanistan.

They suggested that the detentions, which could not be confirmed, were reprisals for last month's Taleban defeat by the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat faction and its allies in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Indian army officer, 3 foreign militants killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR (AFP) — An Indian army officer and three foreign Muslim militants were killed Sunday in a fierce gunbattle in this summer capital of Kashmir, police said.

The fighting erupted when dozens of soldiers ringed a hideout of the guerrillas at Saura, on the outskirts of the city, and ordered the gunmen to surrender, the police said.

The militants reportedly opened fire, killing the officer instantly. The military then opened up with heavy guns and mortars, destroy-

ing the hideout. The bodies of the guerrillas were recovered in the rubble and taken to a police station.

Panic gripped the area after the four-hour fighting.

"Both sides used heavy guns and bombs," said Rehana Banu, a 27-year-old woman. "The fighting was intense."

"We remained indoors. Everyone in our family remained glued to the floor."

Police said the dead militants belonged to the pan-Islamic Harkat-ul-Ansar, which is known to have scores of foreigners in its ranks. Most of the foreigners are from Afghanistan.

The foreign militants are known as "guest militants" in the Kashmir valley while the Indian government brands them mercenaries.

Indian officials say hundreds of foreigners are active in Kashmir.

Around 20,000 people have died in a bloody Muslim separatist campaign raging in Kashmir since 1989. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the militants. Islamabad denies the charge.

New Delhi official blames police for cinema tragedy

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The chief minister of the Indian capital has blamed police for a horrific fire which killed 57 people in a packed cinema here this month, newspapers said Sunday.

Sahib Singh Verma said late Saturday that Delhi police were "solely responsible" for the tragedy although other administrative bodies also had a "moral responsibility," the Asian Age reported.

Mr. Verma did not elaborate. Delhi police give out licences to cinemas in the city. Newspapers have claimed the Uphaar Cinema where the fire-cum-stampede occurred June 13 had secured a licence to operate although it violated fire safety rules.

The Uphaar Cinema fire was blamed on an electric transformer which was in the build-

ing's underground basement rather than outside, where it should have been positioned. The basement also served as a car park.

More than 1,000 people were watching a Hindi block-buster when the blaze started and led to a stampede which left 57 people dead and about 150 others injured. Most victims suffocated to death in the smoke.

The authorities later arrested four of the cinema's managers and an engineer from the city's Electricity Department for negligence. Four engineers from the city government were also suspended.

Since then, New Delhi authorities have ordered all power transformers to be shifted from the basements of high-rise buildings and cinemas and are now busy surveying fire safety measures across the city.

Albanians vote in verdict on Berisha

TIRANA (R) — Albania votes in parliamentary elections next week which will expose how Europe's poorest country views President Sali Berisha five years after he launched a drive to capitalism now badly stained by violence.

A heart surgeon who once served the hard-line Communist leadership under Enver Hoxha, Mr. Berisha has been campaigning hard to keep intact the huge majority won last year by his Democratic Party.

Many Albanians and Western observers say that election last June was unfair and the Democrats face a tough challenge from an array of parties, led by the Socialists — heirs of the Communists and now ardent proponents of market economics.

"This is our chance to show together that we have chosen to move away from dictatorship," Socialist leader Fatos Nano told a rally Saturday in Kruje, a town half way up a mountain 35 kilometres north of Tirana.

"Like you, we want free enterprise and private property. It is our historic obligation to make Albania part of Europe."

Mr. Berisha, whose own job is not at stake in next Sunday's legislative elections, was forced to call the early poll in March at the height of an armed rebellion by Albanians blaming him for the collapse of investment schemes into which they had sunk their savings.

Rioters looted weapons from depots and for several days, with army and police absent, Albania perched on the brink of anarchy. Some 1,500 people have been killed.

Mr. Berisha also had to appoint a multi-party government led by the Socialists. A multinational peace-keeping force of 7,000 was dispatched to restore a degree of order but gangs still roam many roads and some areas elude control of authorities.

After weeks of doubts about whether conditions were right to stage the vote, all parties have agreed to sign an agreement Monday in Rome to ensure it proceeds freely and peacefully.

The president portrays himself and his Democratic Party as guarantors of Albania's stability. He told a rally last week that the Socialists "are to blame for a red rebellion aimed at toppling the democratically elected government."

Predicting the outcome is virtually impossible in a country with no real opinion polls and huge disparities between cities and a backward countryside.

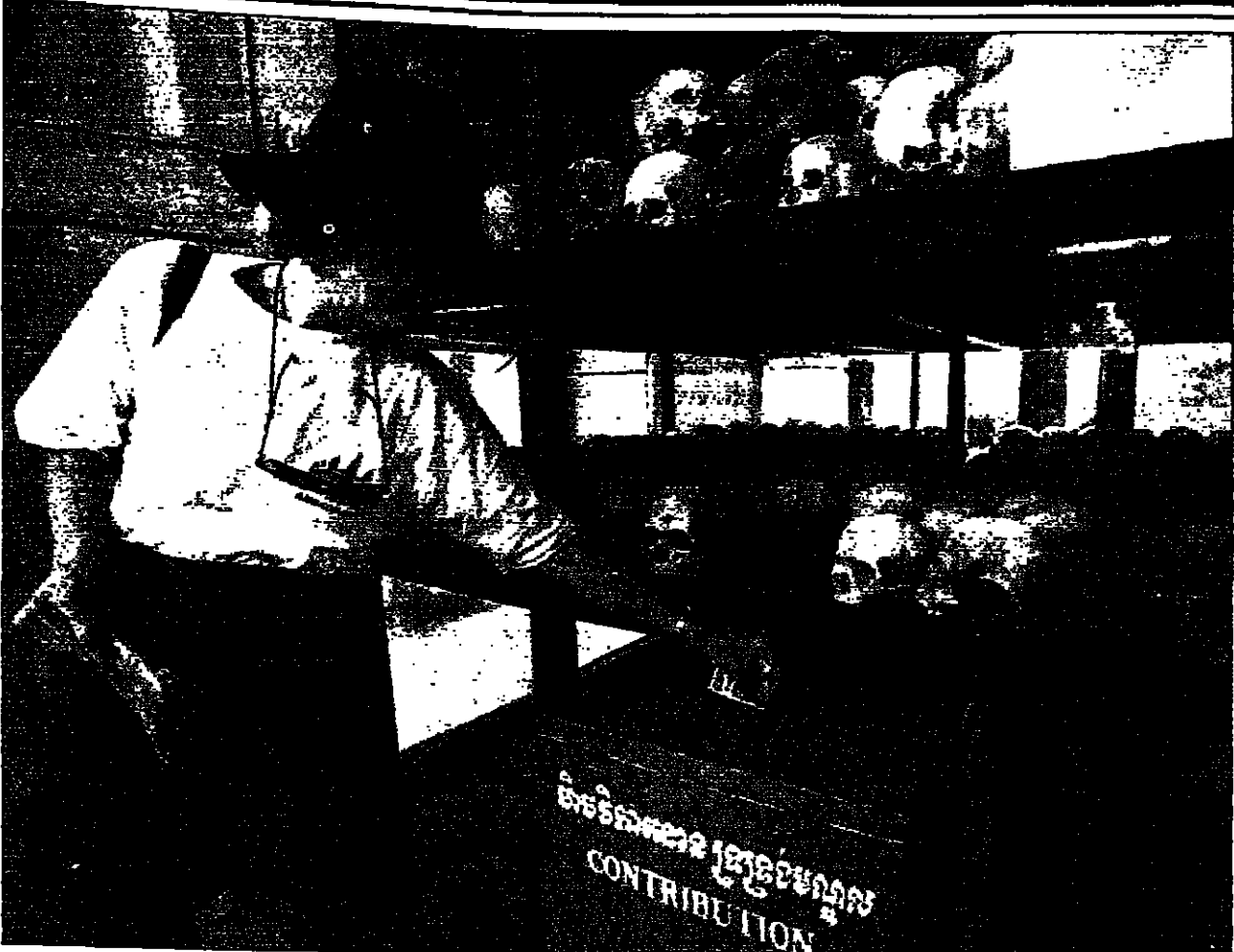
Socialists have tended to draw larger crowds than Mr. Berisha's Democrats but rallies by both sides have been carefully stage-managed with little enthusiasm by rank-and-file voters.

First elected in 1992 by parliament, Mr. Berisha set out to place Albania firmly on the road to market-oriented development and with the backing of the United States and Western leaders achieved some of Eastern Europe's best results.

But he ignored warnings of impending catastrophe with the rise of pyramid investment schemes offering fabulous returns to unwary investors. Western support ebbed away as he took increasingly authoritarian measures, including his reelection in March a day after the proclamation of a state of emergency.

An overnight curfew remains in place and violence remains commonplace, particularly outside Tirana.

Several dozen people have been killed in the past week. In the latest major incident, a senior Democratic Party official was seized by armed men in the southern town Sarande, one of the focal points of the rebellion near the Greek border.



An unidentified American tourist gives a donation to help preserve the Choeung Ek 'killing fields,' 15 kilometres southwest of Phnom Penh Sunday. Choeung Ek, the site of 129 mass graves containing an estimated 40,000 victims killed by the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge regime, was discovered in 1980. Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot is said to be held by members of a rebel splinter faction but there are conflicting rumours over his fate (Reuters photo)

Problems and doubts surround fate of Pol Pot

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodia's first prime minister said Sunday he wanted to see Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot moved out of the jungle where he was being held by members of a rebel splinter faction which captured him this week.

But Prince Norodom Ranariddh's co-premier and political rival, Hun Sen, complicated an already confused swirl of rumour and speculation about Mr. Pol Pot by saying the Khmer Rouge chief might already be dead.

Mr. Hun Sen cited his interior minister, Sar Kheng, as saying he had heard an unconfirmed report that Mr. Pol Pot had already died. Mr. Sar Kheng later told Reuters that he had heard the report from one of his aides who may have been confused.

Prince Ranariddh told reporters Mr. Pol Pot should be moved from the guerrillas' jungle base of Anlong Veng in the northwest of the country, where he was being held by Khmer Rouge renegades, for security reasons.

Rumours that Mr. Pol Pot had died emerged last year but were never confirmed.

Prince Ranariddh and military leaders from his FUNCINPEC party have spearheaded efforts to strike a deal with more moderate elements of the Khmer Rouge to the anger of Mr. Hun Sen who sees the possibility of an agreement between Prince Ranariddh and the breakaway rebels as a threat to his position.

Both men are jockeying for support ahead of general elections scheduled for next year.

Prince Ranariddh said earlier that Mr. Pol Pot, architect of the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge "killing fields" rule which left more than one million Cambodians dead, was now in Anlong Veng and that he was very sick. Mr. Pol Pot, 69, has long suffered from malaria.

"We should move him out as soon as possible ... for security reasons," Prince Ranariddh said.

The prince did not elaborate on why he felt Mr. Pol Pot should be moved for reasons of security but government officials said negotiators were headed to the guerrilla zone Sunday to work out problems surrounding Mr. Pol Pot's fate.

One senior official said there was still factional disagreement in the fractured Khmer Rouge as to what should happen to Mr. Pol Pot.

"The situation in Anlong Veng is very complicated," said the army general who declined to be identified.

"As far as I know Pol Pot's supporters are trying to liberate him from the breakaway group," the general, speaking by telephone from northern Cambodia, told Reuters.

Prince Ranariddh's top military man, Deputy Chief of

Staff General Nhiek Bun Chhay, who brokered talks with the breakaway Khmer Rouge faction, travelled north Sunday in an attempt to seal the veteran guerrilla supremo's fate, officials said.

Prince Ranariddh said the hated Khmer Rouge chief would eventually be brought to Phnom Penh and moves were under way to bring him before an international tribunal for the crimes he committed during his brutal reign.

Mr. Pol Pot fled Angkor Veng earlier this month after ordering the slaughter of his defence chief and almost a dozen members of his family.

Mr. Pol Pot led a Cambodian peasant army to victory against the U.S.-backed Lon Nol Republic in 1975, or Year Zero, as the Khmer Rouge called it. They immediately embarked on a bloody restructuring of society.

Mr. Pol Pot's guerrillas emptied Phnom Penh at gunpoint, forcing the sick from their beds. Women, children and the elderly were ordered into the countryside and put to work in labour camps.

More than one million people were executed as enemies of Mr. Pol Pot's utopian revolution or died of disease, starvation or overwork during the "killing fields" period.

Mr. Pol Pot was sentenced to death in absentia by a Phnom Penh court soon after his overthrow by an invading Vietnamese army in 1979.

Meanwhile, Thai Prime Minister Chuanwalee Yongchaiyudh said Sunday that Cambodia's co-premiers had told him the country's civil war was over.

Mr. Chuanwalee returned from a visit to Phnom Penh where he held private talks with the country's feuding leaders, Prince Ranariddh and Mr. Hun Sen.

"The two Cambodian prime ministers will work together for the nation because the civil war is over," he told reporters at Bangkok Airport.

"From now, Cambodia is starting a new lesson in history which will help the development of Cambodians and help the country unite with ASEAN. I got this confirmed by both prime ministers," Mr. Chuanwalee said.

The premier, however, did not elaborate on his comments which came following news that Pol Pot had been captured by a rebel splinter faction and after Prince Ranariddh said Khmer Rouge forces had agreed to surrender.

Thai press reports said Mr. Chuanwalee had asked the Cambodian prime ministers to "work together for the sake of their country and the stability of the region."

Thai officials however were quick to stress that Thailand would refrain from offering "too much advice" to avoid interfering in its neighbour's affairs.

Spanish Socialist Party picks successor to Gonzalez

MADRID (R) — Veteran politician Joaquin Almunia won broad support from Spain's Socialist leaders Saturday to replace his longtime ally, former Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, as party chief.

Overcoming opposition from the party's left wing, Mr. Almunia — who worked for years in Mr. Gonzalez's shadow but had rarely been mentioned as a possible successor — was picked by the Socialist Executive Committee to assume the top leadership role.

Socialist insiders said a vote of the party's 1,000-delegate Congress set for Sunday was all but certain to formally endorse him as Mr. Gonzalez's successor.

The decision came one day after Mr. Gonzalez, who led Spain for 13 years until his electoral defeat in 1996, stunned his supporters by telling them he would not run again as the party's secretary-general. That gave party leaders only 48 hours to come up with a replacement.

Mr. Almunia, 49, the party's parliamentary spokesman and a former government minister, emerged as

the top choice from a list of Socialist heavyweights that included regional presidents, national deputies and city mayors.

Basque Socialist chief Ramon Jauregui said party leaders, working behind closed doors, concluded that Mr. Almunia "brought together the best qualities needed for a secretary-general."

But while party leaders sought to present a unified front, there were a few dissenting voices. Leftist delegates from three of the country's 17 autonomous regions — Extremadura, Asturias and Cantabria — were unhappy with Mr. Almunia's more moderate views and were refusing to back him.

"All the rest of the regions are in full support of Almunia," a party spokesman told reporters.

The 55-year-old Mr. Gonzalez, who had called for a "change of generations" in the Socialist hierarchy, had promised not to interfere in the selection process and gave no hint of his preference.

Nevertheless, Socialist leaders ended up picking one of Mr. Gonzalez's most stalwart loyalists. Mr. Al-

munia's membership in the Socialist Workers' Party dates back to the mid-1970s when dictator Francisco Franco ruled Spain and Mr. Gonzalez was still in exile trying to steer the party away from Marxism.

As Mr. Gonzalez rose in stature, Mr. Almunia moved up through the party ranks, winning election as a parliamentary deputy from Madrid in 1979. Mr. Gonzalez swept into power in 1982 on a surge of popular support to rebuild Spain after nearly 40 years of Franco rule.

Mr. Almunia served in Mr. Gonzalez's administration as labour minister from 1982 to 1986 and as minister of public administration from 1986 to 1991. And as the party's current parliamentary spokesman, he has raised his public profile.

But an opinion poll taken before Mr. Gonzalez's surprise announcement Friday showed that only 1.7 per cent of Socialist voters preferred him as a replacement for Mr. Gonzalez to lead the party into the next election scheduled for the year 2000.

The runaway favourite of the party's rank-and-file was NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana. But with

Mr. Gonzalez stepping aside, Mr. Solana wasted no time in taking himself out of the running.

A party official said Mr. Solana, a former Socialist foreign minister, wants to see NATO through the first stage of its planned eastward expansion but might be ready to return to Spanish politics after his term ends in 1999.

One day after Mr. Gonzalez's dramatic announcement, the party faithful were still reeling from the impact. But Socialist insiders mostly agreed that his departure was needed to begin overhauling the party, which was left demoralised by its defeat by the centre-right Popular Party led by Jose Maria Aznar.

The Socialist-leaning daily El Pais praised Mr. Gonzalez for relinquishing power, saying it shows he is "a politician of the highest quality of his generation and that he understands it's time to give way to the next."

But the centre-right El Mundo newspaper suggested it was merely a "strategic withdrawal" that would allow him to keep control behind the scenes and eventually stage a comeback.

U.N. takes first step towards Congo force

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. Security Council Saturday took the first tentative step towards authorising an African buffer force for strife-torn Congo.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan told reporters after discussions with the council that the 15 members gave him the green light to hold "exploratory consultations" with the African leaders who had volunteered troops for such a force.

Fighting erupted in Congo on June 5 when army forces loyal to President Pascal Lissouba surrounded the home of Denis Sassou Nguesso, an opposition leader and former president, to try to disarm his private militia ahead of planned presidential elections on July 27.

Mr. Annan said that he would be contacting "most likely African" leaders about the rapid dispatch of an advance force which could be bolstered later. Western nations may agree to help with logistic support, officials said.

But Mr. Annan stressed that "even for the advance force to go in, we need to understand that the ceasefire will hold and that the parties are determined to seek political reconciliation before we move it in."

The meeting was scheduled after Gabonese President Omar Bongo wrote to ask the U.N. Security Council to authorise a force "which would be responsible for contributing to the restoration of peace and stability to Congo" as soon as

possible.

Mr. Bongo, assisted by U.N. and Organisation of African Unity mediator Mohamed Sahnoun, is leading mediation efforts in the conflict.

In a letter to the council expanding on the situation, Mr. Annan said that up to 1,800 troops plus 40 to 50 U.N. military observers would be required to secure the airport, ensure the ceasefire implementation and stabilise the situation ahead of the elections.

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Report: S. African agents helped smuggle out Mobutu millions

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South African intelligence agents helped top generals of former Zairean leader Mobutu Sese Seko smuggle tens of millions of dollars out of Kinshasa just before it fell to the rebel forces of Laurent Kabila, the Sunday Independent newspaper reported.

The same agents were believed to be involved in a scheme to recruit mercenaries for a planned campaign to retake Kinshasa, the newspaper said.

A spokesman for head of intelligence Joe Nhlanhla denied that the government had sanctioned the operation in which \$40 million in cash and several millions more in diamonds were

spirited from the country.

He told the Sunday paper that the Intelligence Department would investigate the allegations.

The Sunday Independent said the cash and diamonds came on three separate flights aboard a private jet operating from nearby Lanseria Airport; the last flight was on May 25, the day after Mr. Kabila's troops entered Kinshasa, it said.

The final flight landed at the Johannesburg International Airport and cases of cash and diamonds were unloaded into four cars that were apparently given special permission to drive on to the apron, it said.

It was not known where the

money and gems went, the newspaper said, quoting a domestic intelligence source.

The source said domestic intelligence agents who approached the plane were told to mind their own business by operatives who said they were involved in an external intelligence operation.

The Sunday Independent also said the agency was investigating reports that one of its operatives had received \$24 million from Mr. Mobutu's followers to recruit mercenaries for an attack on Kinshasa.

The attack would be launched from a base of the Angolan UNITA rebel movement on the Congo-Angola border, it said.

Former Pakistani spymaster protests Kansi arrest

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan's former military spymaster said Sunday he would sue the government over the seizure and transfer to the United States of a Pakistani accused of a deadly shooting outside CIA headquarters in Virginia.

General Hameed Gul, former director general of the military Inter Services Intelligence, told Reuters he would submit a petition to a High Court Monday about how Mir Aimal Kansi, 33, was captured and delivered to his accusers.

"I want to raise the sovereignty issue. The sovereignty of Pakistan has been violated," Gen. Gul said. "The law of land has been flouted with impunity as no legal requirements were fulfilled."

His voice was the latest to be heard in a storm of protest over the Kansi affair, which many politicians and ordinary people see as a national insult by Pakistan's powerful ally.

Gen. Gul, a fervent supporter of national and Islamic causes, argued that national sovereignty had been reasonably violated.

Sri Lanka Tamils urge end to ethnic crisis

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's Tamil political parties are getting edgy over a delay in introducing changes to the constitution to give wide autonomy to minorities aimed at ending the country's ethnic crisis.

Tamil politicians said Sunday the government had been dragging its feet over a draft constitution being discussed in a parliamentary select committee and that further delay might lead to an intensification of the war that has already killed thousands.

Murugesu Sivasithambaram, leader of the mainline Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), told Reuters Sunday his party was upset with the government over its inability to end the conflict quickly.

"We are stressing the need for a ceasefire and start of negotiations (with the rebels) for the settlement of the northeast problem," he said.

Mr. Sivasithambaram said his party was planning to walk out of Parliament when the house debates emergency laws next month as a protest against the government's handling of the conflict.

"This will be a demonstration that we are dissatisfied with the way the government is handling the situation," he said.

Sri Lanka is ravaged by a war, now in its 14th year, waged by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels against government troops. The LTTE demand an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the Indian Ocean island's north and east.

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Elections, a win for democracy

EARLIER SPECULATION over whether general elections for the 13th Parliament will be held on time, later this year, is effectively over. With the statement by HRH Crown Prince Hassan in Washington last week to this effect and another by the minister of interior two days ago, the speculation, or wishful thinking on the part of some, that the elections might be postponed for one or two years should now be put behind us. Had the elections been postponed more than a problem would have arisen, not least missing the excitement and the interest that holding elections on time would bring us.

What we need to ponder now, before even contemplating what sort of new Parliament we will have, is who will be running, within which party, under what slogans and alliances and who will get elected. What we are sure of already, however, is that the newly-established group, the National Constitutional Party (NCP), will enter the race with full force and field as many candidates as they could. Meanwhile, their rival, the Islamic Action Front, seems to be undecided. While the rank and file of the front are busy conducting primaries by electing their candidates for the different constituencies, the leadership seems to be uncertain whether to even take part in the elections. The Islamists and their reluctant allies on the left have been casting doubt on the intention of the government following the introduction of the new Press and Publications Law last month. The Islamists in particular are implicitly accusing the government of being biased in favour of the Constitutionalists. They claim that with three Constitutional ministers in the government already, it is going to use all of its influence to ensure that NCP candidates win the greatest number of seats in the next Parliament. The Islamists thus want assurances from the government, and if possible from others, that this will not happen.

The government, meanwhile, maintains that it is committed to holding free and fair elections but is not going to invite foreign observers to monitor them since that constitutes an infringement on sovereignty. Jordan, the government argues, is known for its clean record in this regard.

The Islamists, in any case, fear that if they boycott the elections and persuade the left to do so, the exercise would leave the political field for the Constitutionalists to dominate. They consequently have to think twice before they decide to boycott the election.

Meanwhile, it will do the government no harm, and the country much good, if the former went out of its way to, first, affirm in the strongest possible terms its total commitment for free and fair elections, and, second, to make good on that commitment and devise a formula in coordination with all the political parties by which independent local observers, such as from the judiciary, could be employed to ensure fairness and freedom of the elections.

In the end, the full participation of all political groups and personalities in the new exercise of democracy and pluralism is a big plus for our political system and the whole country.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily discussed Jordan's relations with Gulf countries, focusing in particular on means of transport that used to move from Jordan to the other Arab states and vice versa. Since Jordan's relations with the Gulf countries have improved and government officials exchange visits and declare they are concerned with enhancing inter-Arab solidarity, it is quite logical to demand that Jordan approach these Gulf states to ensure that Jordanian vehicles of all kinds are allowed to resume their trips across borders to reach their destinations, said Tareq Masarweh. The writer pointed out that Jordanian vehicles are still banned from travelling to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since the Gulf war and Jordanian governments have, to date, failed to ensure the resumption of such trips or have shunned discussing this subject with the Gulf governments. The writer said that brotherly ties among Arab states, as expressed in public by leaders of the Gulf countries, should be translated in practice and Jordanian vehicles should be allowed to make the trips across the Arabian peninsula since Jordan's borders are open to other Arab countries vehicles at all times.

A WRITER for Al Arab Al Yawm criticised the successive governments of Jordan for failing to uproot corruption despite their declared intention to do so at the outset of their mandates and suggested that the government ministers set a good example for the public by declaring their wealth before they assuming public office. Mohammad Subeichi said that a parliament committee can register each minister's wealth before and after his service in the post in order to absolve him or her of any accusation by the opposition or any other group. In the writer's view such a practice would decrease the number of persons wishing to assume ministerial posts and will also enhance public confidence in the ministers. Furthermore, said the writer, ministers receiving expensive gifts, like cars, should deliver them to the state's treasury since the gifts in such case are offered to the position rather than the ministers themselves. Since so much has been said and written about corruption and since none of the successive governments has succeeded in exposing a corrupt minister, this is taken as a sign that no corruption exists in higher places, the writer said. He added that informing the public about ministers' wealth before they take office will ensure that the country remains free of corruption.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

The labour market — a game whose rules need to change

THERE ARE so many distortions in the Jordanian economy that one begins to wonder at times whether Jordan does have any form of market. Nowhere are these distortions more obvious than in the labour market, where the business owners (consumers of labour) and employees (suppliers of labour) play completely different games.

The assumptions of each party, if taken in isolation of each other, are irrational and, forgetting the chicken-egg dilemma for a moment, the strategies of both players are quite enlightening, if not entertaining: the employer tries to maintain long working hours while the employee shirks and invents methods or schemes to evade work. The result is a market that is desperately in need of change. But first let's delineate the basic cause of this game: there is no hourly minimum wage law in Jordan. The absence of such a wage rate undermines the value of time and some very important economic concepts, such as the rule of diminishing marginal product.

Employers in the private sector request long working hours from their employees because the longer they work the more they produce — forgetting unfortunately that the productivity of a labourer diminishes after a number of hours and that one's hourly output diminishes to zero after some time.

Business owners believe that as long as they can get some output from the worker they are doing the right thing. Surely they are being rational. The employer has no incentive to listen to the economist's appeal not to work somebody to the point of zero output per hour since he/she does not pay an hourly wage. Thus, the employer loses nothing by keeping the employee at work for as long as possible. But at the same time, the employer has to hire other workers or pay for more hours of work and expect greater output than he/she would otherwise receive under the no-hourly wage regime.

On the other hand, workers have many strategies to counter the greed of their employers. They devise mechanisms to reduce the amount of work effort they spend on the job. There are several examples of this form of shirking behaviour: reading newspapers at work for several hours; paying condolences to a

friend's or relative's family during work hours — the further the person's house from the workplace the better because the break increases; taking training and management seminars during work hours; taking longer than usual breaks to pray — this works for Christians and Muslims alike; and inventing occasions and friendships to create excuses to visit friends, in their time of need of course, during work hours — this works amazingly well in the public sector. All these are but a few examples which can be empirically proved in Jordan everyday.

Note that each player of this game is rational, given each other's strategy. The employer wants to increase the number of hours worked by the employee to get the most amount of output, and the employee wants to shirk as many hours as possible because he/she knows that additional output will not be compensated for. Neither player has an incentive to use economic sense. The employer would not allow the worker shorter hours because this would simply mean lower output, and the employee would not give the worker more output because that would require more work.

What is the answer? Like in most industrial countries, an hourly wage. This would change the way the employer and employee view each other. The employer would view the employee in terms of "productive work hours" instead of "a worker," while the employee would view his/her work as a set of hours during which a certain minimum output must be produced.

Unemployment in Jordan would be reduced instead of increased as a result of an hourly wage. Furthermore, while the number of hours worked per labourer would fall, the productivity of labour would rise. Simultaneously, the number of leisure hour available to labour would increase, causing workers to spend more of their well-earned wages in order to enjoy their leisure time. Thus, not only does productivity increase, so does spending. Unfortunately, such a benefit can only accrue if the game in the workplace were to take a different shape.

Just as effective aid gets easier, support for it is dwindling

By Bimal Ghosh

GENEVA — The world's 29 richest countries have sharply reduced their development aid to poor countries. Fresh figures from the OECD show that in 1995 a mere 0.27 per cent of the affluent countries' total GNP was spent on development aid — the lowest level for 45 years.

Budgetary constraints are no doubt part of the explanation. No less important are the rich countries' compassion fatigue and growing public cynicism about development aid itself.

Is the cynicism justified? Aid critics argue that much of the money goes down foreign rat holes. Often it encourages inefficiency and corruption.

Critics are also quick to point out that there is nothing to prevent rich countries' citizens from increasing their voluntary contributions. Indeed, the flow of funds to charity organisations has seen a sharp rise in recent years.

More important, private capital flows to the developing countries have more than doubled since 1989, pushing economic growth. True, nearly 80 per cent of the private capital has gone to no more than 12 relatively well-off countries.

But the aid critics maintain that this proves their point. If developing countries embrace the kind of market-oriented policy reforms that sustain growth, they need not bother about official aid.

East and Southeast Asian countries can ignore foreign aid because they opted for market-friendly policies and are now flush with private capital.

By contrast, sub-Saharan Africa continues to depend on aid. In several of these countries development aid makes up more than 30 per cent of GDP, and half or even three-quarters of domestic investment. But sustained growth has remained elusive, except in a few reform-minded countries.

In 1965, the average per

capita income in sub-Saharan Africa was 60 per cent of the developing country average. Despite massive aid flows, it is less than 35 per cent today.

This new wisdom about economic openness and the perceived failure of aid has now led Washington to launch an economic development plan for the region that relies mostly on trade and investment and marks a shift away from development aid.

A development strategy

gies and promote efficiency in the world economy from which all nations, including the poorer ones, could in principle benefit. But this presupposes the existence from the beginning of a level playing field for all actors.

When there is glaring inequality between and within nations, the market fails. The weaker nations and vulnerable domestic groups remain largely excluded. Not only is distributive justice denied, but in the long run such exclusion means serious limits to economic growth."

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based on economic openness and market liberalisation has much to offer. A recent study by the Harvard Institute for International Development revealed that more than 25 per cent of Africa's slower growth, compared to East Asia, is attributable to lack of openness.

And a World Bank study last year found that domestic market barriers cost sub-Saharan African countries \$11 billion a year, equal to total development aid to the region in 1991.

But can the poorer countries in Africa or elsewhere rely solely on a freer play of market forces for their economic growth and social welfare?

The talk of open markets that allow free flows of trade and investment and unrestricted competition makes sense, but only up to a point. Market forces can release ener-

gies and promote efficiency in the world economy from which all nations, including the poorer ones, could in principle benefit. But this presupposes the existence from the beginning of a level playing field for all actors.

run such exclusion means serious limits to economic growth. By empowering poorer nations and domestic groups to compete in the marketplace, development aid can redress this deficiency and restrain discriminatory use of market forces by entrenched oligopolies.

Increasing liberalisation of the global economy thus makes the role of development aid more important, not less.

Much of the disenchantment with aid stems from its unwise use in three main ways.

First, it has been seen as a powerful lever to impose policy reform on reluctant aid receivers.

True, policy dialogue and advice as part of development aid can be useful in sensitising a country about the merits of reforms. But money cannot buy reform, and little can be achieved by making aid strictly condition-

al on it.

Still, as new research in 56 developing countries by the World Bank has confirmed, the extra support from foreign aid can be extremely valuable for a country that is already genuinely committed to policy reform and where people are anxious to have positive change.

Second, in the past, pumping more and more development aid into the same country has often been perceived as a measure of success in the aid business. This has led to ever increasing aid dependency. Aid should be time-bound and carefully geared to promoting self-reliance, so that before long a country may do without it.

Third, development aid must be de-linked from the immediate and narrow commercial interests of the donor country. When it is tied to the procurement of goods and services in the donor country, not only does it diminish in financial value by some 30 per cent on average, but it breeds corruption in both sending and receiving countries. Worse, it tends to distort the development objectives of the receiving country and fails to help those who need it most.

Aid is most meaningful when used both as a device to ensure distributive justice and as an integral part of the strategy to promote economic efficiency and sustainable growth.

Policy shifts to openness have sharply enhanced the importance of aid for poor countries. The climate, too, is getting better for effective use of aid. The irony is that precisely at this time, support for aid in rich countries is dwindling.

The writer, a former senior director dealing with development cooperation activities in the United Nations system, is a consultant to international organisations. The article above is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

Human Rights File

Turkey's path may lie in between extremist positions

By Waleed M. Sadi

IT IS one thing for Turkey to be secularist, but it is quite another to appear anti-religious. Secularism worldwide is not synonymous with atheism, except in the former Soviet Union and other communist countries. In other parts of the world, especially where pluralistic democracy has been adopted as a way of political life, the two phenomena, i.e., separation of state matters from religion, have coexisted peacefully and constructively, without ever suggesting that they are mutually exclusive.

In their determination to uphold a separation of state from religion, Turkey's military often give the wrong impression that Islam should be contained as if it were some kind of disease. This is where secularism in Turkey needs to redress the image and show the way to coexistence between religion and secularism by voicing respect for and confidence in the ability of the majority of Turks to practise their faith freely, without trespassing the divide between state matters and religious affairs.

At the same time, it should be recognised that religion in any society, even in the most advanced democracies, plays an indirect role in articulating standards and policies across the board. All Western countries are affected by Christianity in the shaping of their life styles and policy postures on most issues. Turkey cannot be an exception.

Extremism in all forms should be shunned, whether it comes from religious fundamentalists or from hardline secularists. It is therefore perplexing that the two camps in Turkey are not really talking to one another. On the one hand, the Islamists view the military establishment and other major political parties as simply against Islam. On the other, the military and its supporters within the major political factions continue to harbour the conviction that a rise in Islam would take the country to the path of Iran and is therefore a paramount danger that must be avoided at all costs.

There is a return to religion in many parts of the world, something that suggests that people are turning to religion to solve the myriad problems that the material world has failed to redress.

We see a sharp rise in fundamentalism in Israel, Egypt, Syria and in North Africa. Several Western countries are also experiencing a religious revival. Turkey is no exception, especially in the wake of the major upheavals that its people have had to undergo after the advent of the free market economies.

Being basically a traditional society, the upsurge in materialism in Turkey caused major concern. It is therefore natural that the Turks turn religious, especially that their living conditions have been unduly compromised by laissez-faire economics.

Instead of treating the rise of religion as an evil, the secularists need to examine the conditions which have led to this natural and logical national response and try to rectify them as a matter of great urgency.

The worst message that secularists can send out to their people is to suggest that religion is no longer relevant or tolerable. Following the teachings of Islam, including teaching its precepts, should not be viewed as a taboo. Religion in general has a vital role to play in human life, and any threat to the right to practise religion teachings freely, under any pretext or guise, is simply doomed to failure.

It would be more useful to find a common ground between those who do not wish religion to play a direct role in state affairs and those who wish to have the ideals of their religion play a central role. Cultivating moderation in the practice of Islam in Turkey would be much more effective in the long run than adopting a hard-line posture against religion.

We live in a constantly changing and evolving world, where positions must be made amenable to an evolutionary interpretation. What was good and necessary for Turkey five decades ago; it may not necessarily be the right course to follow at the turn of the century. Both sides in Turkey are called upon to moderate their views. The correct path may very well lie in between the two extreme stances.

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LETTERS

Objectionable raids

To the Editor:

I APPLAUD the efforts of the Islamic opposition leaders, whose photo appears on your homepage (June 19, 1997), against the Turkish incursion in Iraq.

I hope, at the same time, that these same leaders make it clear to the regime in Baghdad that its daily incursions against the people of Iraq are just as objectionable.

Ghassan Rassam,
Watan Iraqi Democracy.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Women participation in political life — changes did occur, but much still needed

By Hiam O. Kalimat

ACCORDING TO Article 6 of the Constitution, Jordanians are equal before the laws and there is no discrimination regarding their rights and obligations. But if laws and regulations, generally, protect the right of Jordanian women to equality, discrimination often occurs in the application of these laws, especially in the field of employment, even if women have the same qualifications and abilities, normally as a result of traditions and culture.

The first law on elections was issued in December 1923; it was exchanged with a new one in 1928 and then it developed into law No. 24 in 1960. The government issued an amendment in 1974, which provided for women the right to participate in vote and run for elections. But because of the political conditions then, women could not enjoy this right until the 1989 elections, when 12 women ran for Parliament, albeit unsuccessfully, due to lack of electoral experience at both levels, as voters and as candidates. Misconceptions, in addition to the absence of a democratic life since 1957, tend to associate men, more than women, to politics; at the same time, women generally lack the support of parties, tribes and the finances required for success.

Regarding the 1989 election, about two thirds of the women were not free to vote for the candidate they wanted, but had to vote for the candidate their fathers, brothers or husbands wanted.

It is worth mentioning here that political, economic and social factors are also restraints facing Jordanian women who consider entering politics.

Almost complete lack of political achievements therefore brought the number of women candidates for the 1993 parliamentary elections to just three, and only one succeeded, for the first time, to sit under the dome, among 89 men. As for the Upper House, two women were appointed, one in 1989 and another one in 1993.

In the early 1990s, individual activists and groups started to work on the establishment of new political parties, or on the revival of the old ones, by formulating and stating their objectives, calling for meetings, lobbying, creating pressure on decision makers and parliamentarians. In all these processes, women's share was very slight, even after the ratification of the political party's law No. 32, in 1992. Now there are about 22 parties (some of them in the process of merging). Women are members in just 17 of them. Total membership in these parties is about 2,184, with the women not exceeding five per cent; only 22 per cent are in decision-making positions, according to 1997 statistics.

Men do not face the problems that hinder women from full participation in the parliamentary elections. They are normally associated with politics, they retain tribal support and are more experienced in dealing with politics, especially because of the experience they got from their membership in the political parties, which women did not enjoy. They are more capable to manoeuvre and lobby for their campaigns. In addition to their freedom, they can go around and meet with others, unlike most women.

For about 20 years, Jordanians were banned from establishing and participating in political parties.

Women are still discouraged, by the party members themselves or by the society. Therefore, their participation in political parties is very low, it does not exceed three to five per cent.

Women in Jordan could achieve progress in some spheres of life, but their participation in decision making is still very low. This affects their participation in politics, as does the lack of legal awareness, of timing and locations for meetings, in addition to the lack of men's enthusiasm towards women participation. Therefore, women tend to be more active in voluntary societies where they are accepted.

Participation in local councils

In spite of the amendment to the Municipalities Law No. 29 in 1982, which grants the women the right to run for and vote at the municipality councils elections, women do not fully enjoy these rights. They lack self-confidence, experience and motivation.

Before 1994, two women ran for municipality elections, unsuccessfully. Until 1994, when government dissolved municipality councils in order to prepare them for the national elections, senior officials used to be assigned as council members. Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, as the head of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW), assigned 99 women, 79 to act as council members and the rest as members of village councils.

This initiative brought about a big change in the history of Jordan and encouraged women, for the first time, to prepare themselves to run for the elections; ten women won, one as mayor in a rural area.

The lobby and the financial support women received from the JNCW, in addition to the role the Jordanian National Forum for Women had in supporting them, had a great impact. Thus women started to run for the complementary municipal councils elections, which indicates that such participation became an essential part of women political participation and is being accepted by the society even in rural areas.

The study conducted to analyse this experience showed that the society, even among the conservative areas, accepts women in such positions, especially if they are well-educated, active in voluntary work, have self-confidence and a good reputation.

Of course there is big difference between parliamentary elections and municipal council elections, but achievements in any political field will certainly have an impact on the others.

Labour and vocational unions

Most vocational unions were formed between 1950-1960 due to economic, educational and political awareness. They were active in the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, and acted as fora for political and vocational issues in the absence of democracy; there was never major confrontation between them and consecutive governments. In 1997, these unions had more than 73,000 members. 18 per cent of them women. The majority of women was among the dentists, followed by pharmacists and agronomists.

But although there are women in committees, their participation in union activities is very low; they are more interested in scientific, educational and cultural

activities because of traditional constraints and family responsibilities which do not encourage women to be active.

A 1995 study, sampling 689 people from municipal councils and the local community, showed that education, knowledge, strong personality, leadership, ability to communicate, ability to manage and knowledge of municipality laws are the main requirements for municipal council members.

The results showed acceptance of the role of women as leaders, but also that the community believes that women (even with the same qualification as men) are not as qualified as men. Municipal council members agreed that women were good decision makers, and the majority believed that women's abilities were equal to those of the men's.

Regarding the main interest to women as municipal council members, first came health and environmental issues, second technical and planning, third public services and fourth the implementation of law. Half of the women members believed that they were more capable than the male counterparts.

To one question addressed to men, on whether they accepted women leaders, like mayors for example, more than half of the sample answered yes, which indicates that social, cultural and political changes have occurred over the past two decades, that have a positive impact on women.

The writer is a researcher holding a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the Pennsylvania University, Pennsylvania. She contributed the article above to the Jordan Times.

Saving water, protecting the environment — a perpetual challenge

By Dr. Maher Fathi Abu Taleb

A SERIOUS need has arisen to address water and environmental quality issues at the national level in the Kingdom before irreversible changes occur.

The overall water problem in Jordan encompasses water shortages, environmental quality issues and supply distribution concerns. Two major factors have an impact on water availability and demand: the semi-arid climate, which contributes to water scarcity, and the high population growth rates, which contribute to over-stressing limited water supplies. Water in Jordan may have once been clean, fresh and plentiful, but now it is more likely carrying chemical pollutants from factories and semi-treated domestic waste. Some streams may look clear and sparkling, but they carry nitrates, pesticides and other chemicals down to the reservoirs that provide our irrigation water.

For Jordan, environmental problems related to water have a direct effect on the supply-demand imbalances. Because of the generally low flows, surface streams have relatively low assimilative capacity. Treatment levels of wastewater are inadequate in view of the low capacity to assimilate water bodies and, therefore, downstream uses are adversely affected. In the case of groundwater, there are two main sources of contamination: water mining practices and seepage of wastes.

Contamination due to water mining refers to the general propensity of saline water to intrude into the higher levels of aquifers, following extraction rates which are greater than the natural recharge of the aquifer.

"It is important to recognise that environmental improvement in one area of life has positive, ripple effects onto others."

Seepage of wastes refers to the problem of contamination of ground and surface water by industrial activities, septic tanks, semi-treated and untreated wastewater. This seepage has affected groundwater leading to the abandonment of some water wells and the destruction of agricultural farms.

The solutions to the water and environmental quality dilemma are numerous and mostly involve public expenditure optimisation to effectively influence water supply and demand. The government can reallocate water in a more economically sensible way (currently agriculture uses three quarters of all water in Jordan while producing a tenth of its economic output). The government can make its water supply mechanism

more efficient, while teaching the general public to conserve and treat water as the valuable commodity it really is.

At the individual citizen level, many things can also be done. But first, it is important to recognise that environmental improvement in one area of life has positive, ripple effects onto others. For example, when water consumption is reduced, the aquifers are helped to recharge, wastewater load and energy required to treat the waste is reduced, wetlands are saved from destruction and healthy wildlife is promoted. In essence, water not heated with fossil fuel means oil not depleted, carbon not released into the atmosphere and sulphur not deposited as acid rain.

Fortunately, there are now visions for the future and logical plans are in place for water allocation and pricing. But we should not spend so much of our financial resources on a problem that is not as large or as complex as some try to make one believe.

We must all continue to act positively, however, not only to save water in our homes, farms and industries, but to lobby government for further action to protect and enhance our fragile water resource base. Or suffer the eventual consequences.

The writer is president of Environmental Resources Management Consultants of Amman. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Tribes who won't see the forest for the sleaze

By Jamie Drummond

BRAZIL'S AMAZON rainforest could be likened to America's Wild West of old, where he who had the biggest gun or fattest wallet wrote the rules. I travelled to the Amazon for Christian Aid to see whether measures agreed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro to protect the forests and its people from illegal loggers, goldminers and settlers are working.

Chief Tamakurale of the Parakana Indians, a tribe that lives beside a tributary of the Amazon in Para state, told me a typical tale: "We do not want the loggers on our lands. They give us diseases, they kill the forest animals and take turtles from the river so we have nothing to eat. They cut down the trees. If the trees go, some of our children may survive, but they will not be Parakana."

This may sound familiar. The Rio Summit, which was attended by most world leaders, was supposed to signal a new willingness to take the environment and indigenous rights seriously. Though important conclusions were reached in Rio, much of the aid promised by developed countries at the summit to help developing countries preserve and sustainably use their natural resources has not been forthcoming. And it is ironic that in the rainforests of the host nation, Brazil, deforestation rates have increased from 11,130 square kilometres a year in 1991, just before the conference, to 14,896 square kilometres a year in 1994.

In response to this alarming trend in deforestation, the Brazilian government itself launched new measures in the summer of 1996 intended to halt or slow this destruction. The government recognised that much of the problem is

caused by mahogany logging in reserves like that of the Parakana, which are legally set aside for indigenous people. The mahogany loggers not only cause damage themselves but also open the routes by which other settlers follow, adding to the destruction.

Logging in indigenous areas is illegal but hard to trace because of the vast size of the Amazon, so Brazil set out its new measures in July to halt the illegal logging — a ban on new mahogany-felling licences and a reevaluation of all existing licences. Furthermore, the area within any logging concession that can be felled has been reduced from 50 per cent to 20 per cent.

Can these new steps have any impact? One of the biggest concerns is the Ibama (the Brazilian environment police). The Ibama is grossly underfunded: its budget was cut by 40 per cent in 1995 and now it has only 650 agents, 120 land vehicles and 30 boats to patrol an area the size of Western Europe.

Jose Lutzenberger, the former Brazilian Secretary of State for the Environment, summed it up when he said that Ibama outstations were "100 per cent branch offices of the logging companies." Given the large amounts of money to be made, corruption is rife.

We arrived in Para state during the burning season, one of the dry periods when huge areas of rainforest are burned and cleared for cattle ranching and farming. From our small propeller plane, the forest at first appeared like a green ocean, but soon smoke from forest fires enveloped the view in a grey-green haze.

We travelled to the reserve of the Kayapo Indians to locate trucks carrying illegal mahogany. To reach the reserve, we drove

for two hours through the smouldering remains of what just days before had been pristine rainforest. Within minutes, we found a truck carrying about £30,000 of illegal mahogany. The engine was still warm and a cabin door was open — the loggers had seen us coming and were probably watching from the undergrowth.

Instead of confiscating the vehicle and stolen wood as they are empowered to do, the men from Ibama punctured the tyres and took some photographs. They feared that guns were trained on us from the bushes. One officer muttered bitterly that to do their job properly, Ibama needed the resources to make more journeys like this, and more military back-up, so they would have less to fear from retaliation.

The Parakana know their land has been deforested illegally. We flew over a large deforested area that our GPS (global positioning service) proved was within the reserve.

A timber company called Perrachi was fined for illegally logging the area in 1993. Perrachi is one of the main suppliers of Brazilian mahogany to the U.K. market. While the U.K.'s Timber Trade Federation claims that all Brazilian mahogany in the U.K. is now legally sourced, the Parakana claim that Perrachi is still handling timber from illegal logging within their reserve.

"The problem is that, to get around the law, timber companies work increasingly through sub-contractors. It is therefore hard to prove whether companies like Perrachi are involved," explains Tarcisio Feitosa of Cimi, an organisation supported by Christian Aid to work with Amerindian tribes.

"The government's new



Logging means the future paints a grim picture for Amazonian Indians

legislation, though a step in the right direction, cannot guarantee that mahogany on the market is legally and sustainably sourced. I would ask consumers in the U.K. to think twice before

buying it," he said. From the evidence I saw, the Brazilian government needs to do more. First, it must put more resources into ensuring that indigenous land rights are

respected. Ibama also needs to be better managed and resourced. Sarah Tyack of Friends of the Earth has a further request: "If the Brazilian government wants to prove

its credibility on the environment, it should support a ban on the mahogany trade under Appendix 11 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, early in 1997."

That would be a meaningful resolution.

The writer is a researcher for Christian Aid. The above article is reprinted from the Independent.

Horani, Iraqi oil minister hold talks

AMMAN (AFP) — Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rashid Sunday held talks with Jordan's energy minister here about the oil contract between the two countries.

Mr. Rashid told reporters after the meeting with Mohammad Saleh Al Horani that the two men discussed practical details about an oil accord signed in January.

Iraq and Jordan signed an agreement on Jan. 18 calling for an increase in Iraqi oil exports to Jordan by seven per cent this year.

Iraq also raised the price by \$4 per barrel to \$19.3.

Under an oil agreement signed in 1990 which is exempt from U.N. sanctions, Iraq has been supplying Jordan annually with 3.2 million tonnes of crude and 1.2 million tonnes of petroleum products.

The exemption is to help Iraq repay its debts to Jordan.

Mr. Rashid said Mr. Horani would visit Iraq in July to carry on discussions about bilateral cooperation on energy matters.

Mr. Rashid arrived in Amman late Saturday en route for talks in Spain and Austria.

He said he would meet the Spanish foreign minister and other officials for talks on energy and trade cooperation before going to Vienna for a meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) between June 25 and 27.

Industrial nations need separate policy goals to achieve prosperity

DENVER (AP) — The United States needs to guard against inflation, Japan must avoid bigger trade surpluses, and France, Germany and Italy must attack high unemployment, the world's seven richest industrial countries declared Saturday in a draft economic statement.

The policy prescriptions for each country were general but the document

marked the first time since 1993 that summit leaders felt the need to spell out separate economic goals for each nation.

The statement also endorsed an effort to make bribery of public officials by foreign companies illegal. Only the United States has laws against such bribery, and the Clinton administration has been pushing other countries to outlaw the practice so that

U.S. firms will not be at a disadvantage in the competition for global business.

The leaders' statement recognised that the United States is currently in the seventh year of economic expansion, the third longest in history, with unemployment at a 24-year low of 4.8 per cent. However, the document warned that "it is important to remain vigilant against a resurgence of inflation."

Japan remains richest nation for sixth straight year

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan remained the world's "richest nation" for the sixth straight year in 1996 with direct investment overseas still skyrocketing, the finance ministry has said.

The ministry said in a report submitted to Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto that the balance of the nation's net overseas assets jumped 22.9 per cent from a year to a record 103.359 billion yen (\$899 billion).

Assets held by the Japanese government and businesses abroad increased 13.7 per cent to 307.703 billion yen, while liabilities rose 9.5 per cent to 204.344 billion yen.

Germany was the world's second largest creditor nation worldwide with its balance of net overseas assets standing at 17,580 billion yen as of the end of June 1996. France was third with its balance standing at 11,915 billion yen as of July in 1996.

The United States marked a net deficit of 79,555 billion yen as of the end of 1995.

A ministry official was quoted by Kyodo News Agency as saying that Japan's asset increase was due to sharp growth of investment in foreign bonds.

Investment in foreign

securities increased to 108,711 billion yen, up from 88,257 billion yen at the end of 1995 "because investment by institutional and individual investors was very active last year," the official said.

Investors seemed to be encouraged to invest in foreign securities due to the yen's depreciation against the dollar as well as a wide interest rate gap between Tokyo and Washington, the official said.

The yen's exchange rate used for this report was 115.98 yen to the dollar, compared with 102.91 yen a year earlier.

Summit urges further steps to strengthen world financial system

DENVER (AFP) — The seven richest nations called here Saturday for further efforts to strengthen the international financial system and ensure stability in global financial markets.

Group of Seven (G-7) finance ministers, representing all the countries attending the Summit of the Eight here with the exception of Russia, said special efforts were needed in two areas.

They "encouraged international regulatory bodies and national supervisors to reach agreement and implement their proposals for enhanced cooperation among supervisors of 'globally-active financial institutions'."

They said that in this regard they had launched an assessment of identified "impediments to

information sharing."

In a report to heads of state and government at the Summit of the Eight, the finance ministers also called for implementation of a strategy for "strengthening financial systems and prudential supervision in emerging economies."

The ministers referred to proposals drawn up by a joint working party of officials from leading Western financial powers in the Group of Ten (G-10) together with representatives of emerging market economies.

Their proposals for a "concerted" international strategy to help emerging markets avoid financial crises similar to the one that hit Mexico and rocked world markets at the end of 1994 were presented during last April's International Monetary Fund (IMF)

and World Bank meetings in Washington.

The G-7 finance ministers noted that the working party, while detailing the roles to be played by regulatory bodies and international financial institutions, stressed "the ultimate responsibility of national authorities ... the need for sound macroeconomic policies, and the importance of open, competitive and transparent markets."

The ministers also listed progress achieved over the past year toward closer international regulatory cooperation, improved understanding of the risk management process, and improved disclosure practices and better information flows from financial sector firms to supervisors and regulators.

REUTERS

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The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7280	0.6033	1.4405	114.45	1.3874	1690.00	1.9448	6.8280
DE Mark	0.5784	1.0000	0.5448	0.8330	66.20	0.8022	977.10	1.2427	3.3706
GB Sterling	1.6560	2.8610	1.0000	2.3832	189.31	2.2975	2798.64	3.2206	9.6512
CH Franc	0.6842	1.1858	0.4188	1.0000	79.45	0.9828	1172.80	135.15	4.6444
JP Yen	0.0087	1.5093	0.5268	1.2575	1.00	1.2112	14.75	169.78	5.0677
CA Dollar	0.7208	1.2445	0.4340	1.0363	1.21	1.0000	14.008	1.4008	4.1928
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0224	0.3569	0.0852	1478.63	0.4205	1.00	11.50	3.4468
NL Guilder	0.5142	88.88	0.3102	74.06	58.82	0.7132	866.76	1.00	2.9958
FR Franc	0.1716	0.2966	0.1035	24.7084	19.82	0.2380	33.36	33.3600	1.00

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6386	0.3024	3.6728	1535.50	3.3878
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	1.0000	5.2973	0.5325	5.1410	0.4271	5.1876	2168.79	4.7848
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.1868	1.0000	0.97	0.9806	0.98	1.00	409.41	0.9632
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.5781	3.9488	1.0000	3.9488	3.9488	3.9488	1607.16	3.9488
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	1.00	0.8331	1.01	421.86	0.9307
Kuwait Dinar	3.3069	2.3413	12.4024	1.2466	12.04	1.00	12.15	5077.71	0.9307
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1926	1.0212	1.0206	0.9910	0.9823	1.00	418.07	0.9223
Lebanese/1000	0.85	0.4611	2.4425	0.2455	2.3704	0.1969	2.3819	1.00	2.2061
Egyptian	0.2982	0.2090	1.1072	0.1113	1.0745	0.0853	1.0842	453.28	1.00

Energy		Oil	Gas
Brent	17.65	17.60	
W. Text	18.55	18.70	
Bonny	17.55	17.60	
Dubai	16.80	16.73	
UL Gas	180.00	179.00	

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	SA Riyal	AE Dirham	KW Dinar	BH Dinar
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4612	0.16101	0.38422	30.5427	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47092	0.16441	0.39234	31.1486	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
KW Dinar	3.3069	5.72082	1.99681	4.76417	378.788	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.58716	1.60179	3.82263	303.889	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
CY Pound	1.9447	3.3622	1.1738	2.8013	222.571	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Metal Prices		Gold	Silver	Platinum	Al (3 Months)	CU (3 Months)	Zinc (3 Months)	Lead (3 Months)	Ni (3 Months)
Gold (oz's)	337.75	338.25							
Silver (oz's)	4.73	4.75							
Platinum (oz's)	417.2	422.2							
Al (3 Months)	1572	1576							
CU (3 Months)	2525	2530							
Zinc (3 Months)	1383	1396							
Lead (3 Months)	620	623							
Ni (3 Months)	7190	7220							

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	10 Years
USD	5.56	5.55	5.75	5.84	5.96				
GBP	6.50	6.50	6.88	6.87	7.18				
JPY	0.43	0.40	0.50	0.56	0.59				
DEM	3.00	2.88	3.08	3.12	3.17				
FRF	3.12	3.28	3.38	3.39	3.44				
CHF	1.15	1.28	1.21	1.43	1.50				
ITL	6.77	6.65	6.56	6.46	6.37				

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	% Change	High	Low	Open	Close	Prev. Close	Settlement
New York	7798.51	18.45	0.25	7834.06	7777.06	7777.06	7777.06	7777.06	7777.06
DOW JONES	7798.51	18.45	0.25	7834.06	7777.06	7777.06	7777.06	7777.06	7777.06
S&P 500	884.7	0.71	0.08	901.77	887.77	887.77	887.77	887.77	887.77
FT-SE 100	4593.9	-59.8	-1.29	4672.1	4593.9	4593.9	4593.9	4593.9	4593.9
Nikkei 225	20366.54	-122.31	-0.6	20576	20356.5	20356.5	20356.5	20356.5	20356.5
CAC 40	2757.1	17.41	0.64	2770.53	2716.05	2716.05	2716.05	2716.05	2716.05
DAX	3788.27	38	1.04	3798.94	3778.51	3778.51	3778.51	3778.51	3778.51

Energy			Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lb)	195	Spot			
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1638	Spot			
Sugar (\$/ton)	328	Spot			
Wheat (\$/ton)	142.5	Spot			
Soy (\$/c/lb)	22.65	Spot			
Tea (\$/kg)	138	Spot			
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot			
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot			

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	Settlement
US Dollar	0.706	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.1721	1.178	
DE Mark	0.4088	0.4108	
CH Franc	0.4906	0.4933	
FR Franc	0.1215	0.1219	
JP Yen	0.0171	0.0172	
NL Guilder	0.3634	0.3652	
IT Lira	0.4184	0.4205	

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Peanuts



Andy Capp

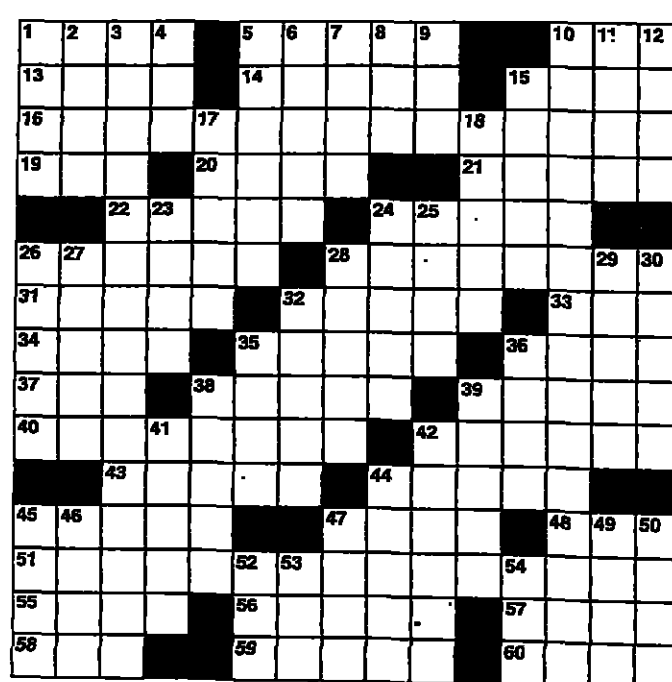


Mutt'n'Jeff



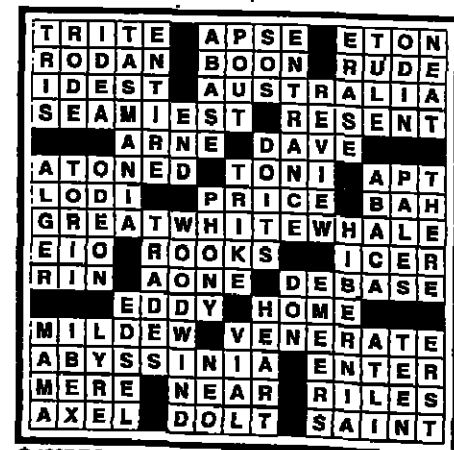
THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Rhyme scheme
5 Philippine island
10 Away
13 Courtyard, for short
14 Irregularly notched
15 James of "The Godfather"
16 With no restrictions
19 Invite
20 Bridge seat
21 Suburb of Baltimore
22 Net
24 Great Plains dwelling
26 Incantations
28 Archetype
31 Roomful of students
32 Pinkish shade
33 Extinct bird
34 Appraise
35 Publish
36 Stimulate
37 Connecting word
38 Effrontery
39 NCO, for short
40 Speak on ethics
42 Recipients
43 Picture
44 Adjust a certain way
45 Roof part
47 Rani's garment
48 Rigid
51 Certain locale
55 Saucy
56 "Goodbye, amigo!"
57 Orphanage
58 Length
59 Gets along
60 — even keel



by James Barrick

- DOWN
1 — pura
2 Rolls
3 Know-it-alls
4 Bustle
5 Portable chairs
6 Come to be
7 US feminist
8 "— Lay Dying"
9 Car of old
10 Misapprehension
11 Breathing sound
12 Gemstone
15 Examined with a view toward robbery
17 Simon and
18 Armstrong
19 Himalayan land
23 If not
24 Mountain lakes
25 QED word
26 Get lost!
27 City in Texas
28 Balance
29 Overcharge
30 Equine animals
32 Fad
35 Nice Nelly
36 Healthy upstairs
38 World-weary
39 — boom
41 Flower cluster
42 Compulsion by threat
44 Western lake
45 See
46 Made high grades
47 Commotion
49 Madame Bovary
50 Youthful ending
52 Clod
53 Govt. org.
54 Greek letter



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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JUNE 23, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Recheck the facts and figures concerning an important contract today, or you could make a costly error which could be embarrassing to your reputation. A financial expert can help you if there are any difficulties.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You should not be pushy or annoying to others today when pursuing a personal goal. Don't allow anyone cause there to be a disagreement between you and your mate or there could be words said which will be later regretted.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be tight-lipped concerning any financial plans you have been making, so there won't be any erroneous information given. You should not disagree with your mate concerning money which has already been spent.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A friend with good intentions may try today to get you to change your financial procedures, however, you would be wise not to allow this to occur. Later this evening you can meet with knowledgeable people for good advice.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You will have to use great care to avoid some big losses today, so keep your eye on the situation. With a little patience, you can get a fellow associate to agree with your ideas and thereby be quite successful.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you update your procedures and use more modern ideas today, you can improve your efficiency which will make your efforts more prosperous. Be more understanding of your mate and do whatever he or she desires.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Go over your bills carefully today before you send them out, and make sure they are correct. Enjoy some recreational activities with your friends later this evening and make this time quite pleasant.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You should not go against the ideas of a fellow business associate this morning or there could be a difficult situation developing. This would be a good evening to invite fascinating friends to your home for pleasant company.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get your career activities nicely organized before you begin it today, and everything will run more smoothly. If you perform well, a fellow associate will follow suit, which can get noticed by a bigwig.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Forget recreation this morning, and focus your attention on the tasks ahead of you so that you can gain recognition of a superior. A successful friend can give you good advice which can be beneficial to your success.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You should not get mixed up in a disagreement between loved ones or you could get in the middle of something ugly. You can get some good ideas from a friend who thinks along modern lines and can provide helpful suggestions.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't daydream this morning, or you will get behind career activities and it will be hard to catch up. Show your devotion to your mate by doing something special which he or she will appreciate in the days ahead.

Birthstone of June: Pearl — Moon Stone

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Sales, net profit fall drastically at Universal Modern Industries

THE UNIVERSAL Modern Industries recorded a drastic fall in terms of sales and net profit last year as they amounted to JD26.6 million and JD59,920 compared to JD42.3 million and JD1.98 million respectively in 1995. The company's total production of vegetable oil in 1996 amounted to 38,319 tonnes of which 18,051 tonnes were exported.

Board Chairman Awni Saket attributed the acute drop in sales and net profit to stiff competition, high and fluctuating prices of oils in international markets and the large reduction in the Jordanian-Iraqi trade protocol for 1996. "This has cut our exports to only 15 per cent compared to the volume of exports in 1995," Mr. Saket told the general assembly.

According to the annual report, the company's total assets at the end of last year stood at JD13.4 million compared to JD13.0 million at the end of the preceding year. Shareholders' equity was lower at JD8.2 million (JD8.35 million in 1995) but current liabilities were higher as they totalled JD5.2 million (JD4.6 million) (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq + Al Dustour).

Al Ekbal Investment and Development Company lists stakes in various firms

THE HOLDING company Al Ekbal Investment and Development has acquired stakes in many companies since it started operations in September 1995 until the end of 1996. According to board chairman, Tawfiq Fakhouri, the company bought four million shares in the Arab Islamic Bank for a 26.7 per cent equity and 1,126,865 shares in the Palestine Telecommunications Company (PTC) for a 2.5 per cent stake. The PTC shares were sold in early 1997 for a JD400,000 profit.

Other investment mentioned in the annual report were:

- 5,000 shares, or 0.5 per cent equity, in the Arab Palestinian Investment Holding Company.
 - 100,000 shares, or 2.5 per cent equity, in the National House for Press and Media.
 - 1.4 million shares, or 70 per cent stake, in the Al Ekbal Real Estate Investment Company.
 - 400,000 shares, or 20 per cent stake, in the Northern International and Industrial Company.
 - 1,455,000 shares, or 29.1 per cent, in the Trust International Transport Company.
 - 250,000 shares, or 5.5 per cent, in the Amman Development and Investment Company.
 - 375,000 shares, or 25 per cent, in the Al Barakah Investment and General Trade.
- Mr. Fakhouri told the shareholders that total earnings by the end of last year amounted to JD546,355 of which JD459,432 were interest earned, JD49,133 real estate profit and JD29,839 returns on investments. Profits from "investment" trading amounted to JD6,152 and other earnings totalled JD1,800. After accounting for JD131,687 in total expenses, the net profit stood at JD386,506.
- The company's total assets amounted to JD8.38 million (Al Dustour + Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i).

Experts submit 40 water projects for Middle East

MUSCAT (AFP) — International experts have submitted 40 projects aimed at curbing the cost of desalinated water in the Middle East and North Africa, a research centre here said Sunday.

Recommendations were made for 40 projects covering nine different technology areas totalling an estimated \$3 million over the first year," said Eric Jankel, head of the Middle East Desalination Research Centre.

The centre set up in December in the Omani capital said its executive council would convene in London later this month to discuss the proposals from the three-day meeting of international experts last week.

An Israeli expert took part in the first meeting of the research advisory council, an offshoot of the multilateral track of the Arab-Israeli peace process launched in Madrid in October 1991.

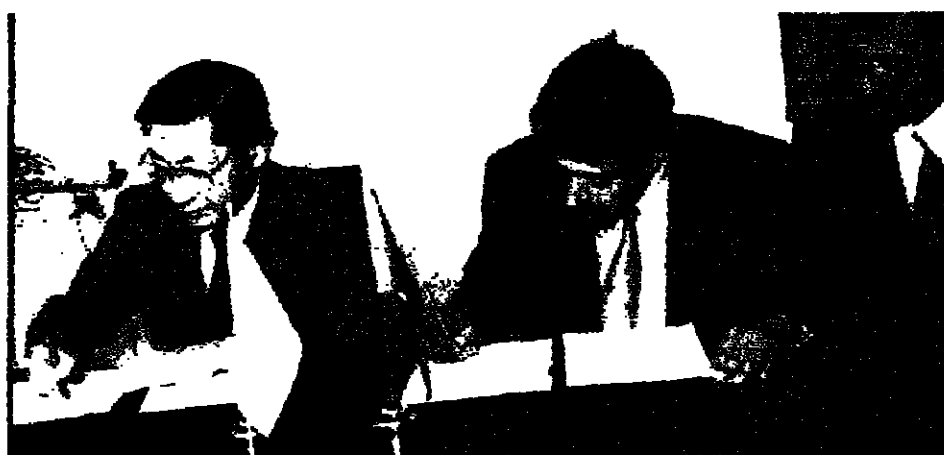
The 20-member council also includes technical and industrial experts from the Palestinian National Authority, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt and Oman as well as the United States and Japan.

Japan donates medical equipment to Farouq Medical Centre in Irbid

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Japanese government Sunday extended a \$90,600 grant to Al Farouq Society for Orphan's Care in Irbid for the purchase of medical equipment.

Takayuki Kimura, ambassador of Japan in Amman, and Mahmoud Al Hawari, president of the society, signed an agreement to this effect at the embassy.

Al Farouq Society for Orphan's Care was established in 1991 aiming to provide educational and medical support as well as medical care to orphans in the area. In 1993, it opened Al Farouq Medical Centre, in order to expand its medical services to neighbour-



Japanese Ambassador Takayuki Kimura (left) and Mahmoud Al Hawari sign the agreement (Petra photo)

ing families, and started to offer general practice,

gynaecological diagnosis and dental clinic services.

The medical centre has been highly appreciated by needy people in the area since its establishment and now the society is planning to improve its ongoing services as well as to further provide new services such as physiotherapy and emergency medical services.

As the government of Japan recognised the high demand of the medical centre in the area and the importance of its role for needy people, it decided to donate medical equipment for gynaecology, laboratory, physiotherapy, general practice and emergency units, which can help the medical centre to provide better quality services.

This grant is provided within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAGP) and is the first of a series of GAGP grants for the Japanese fiscal year 1997. Through this scheme, Japan donated the amount of \$805,465 for 12 projects to NGOs and local communities in Jordan for 1996 besides the general assistance to the government of Jordan.

At the end of the signing ceremony, Mr. Kimura stated: "We believe assistance to NGOs are important and effective to help improve the living standard of the Kingdom. The Japanese embassy will continue to support the activities by those organisations, which aim to meet basic human needs in local population of Jordan."

Asian markets key to U.S. information technology companies

SANTA CLARA, California (AFP) — Continued domination of the information technology sector requires that U.S. companies focus on access to Asian markets, a U.S.-Asia trade commission has said.

"All Asian countries have a strategy for capitalising on information technology and they will be successful with U.S. or without U.S.," said James Morgan, chairman of Applied Materials, a commission on U.S.-Pacific trade and investment policy member.

Members of the group — formed by the White House to study U.S. economic relations with Asia — underlined in a special presentation here in the heart of Silicon Valley what they called the fundamental role of information technology in international commerce.

"We believe that U.S. government and business leaders should give greater consideration to the impact of the information age on our trade and investment relations," commission president, Kenneth Brady, wrote in a letter to President Bill Clinton.

U.S. exports to Asia have increased fourfold over the past ten years, thanks in part to the electronics and information technology industries.

California exported \$50 billion of high-technology products in 1996, and Silicon Valley is "the epicentre of the Pacific Rim boom," said Mr. Morgan.

The executive added that "90 per cent of Silicon Valley exports are high-tech products (and) 60 per cent is headed to Asia."

The commission said that in order for the United States to continue to benefit from such economic ties it must make a sustained effort to boost research and development and protect intellectual property.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 22/06/1997											
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH	PART 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
259,000	213,000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.57	12	780	198170	252.00	254.00	2.00	+
2,340	1,080	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	2	0.00	35	484545	1017697	2.09	2.12	0.03	+
3,600	2,760	BANK OF JORDAN	4.8	0.00	8	1314	4237	3.19	3.22	0.03	+
1,210	880	MED. EAST JUV. BK.	61.1	0.00	1	180	140	83	83	0	-
2,480	2,120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.3	7.55	1	900	2016	2.24	2.24	0	-
5,200	4,250	THE HOLDING BK.	14.7	3.94	9	4700	23239	4.95	4.95	0.02	+
1,450	1,440	JOR. CHARTER BANK	12.8	0.00	70	16805	60118	3.44	3.61	0.17	+
1,050	780	JOR. GULF BANK	5.2	7.95	20	57100	50046	88	88	0	-
4,050	3,480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.9	3.30	9	1503	5467	3.63	3.64	0.01	+
1,840	1,210	UNION RE. INV. TRV.	9	0.00	1	300	246	1.19	1.22	0.03	+
3,800	3,000	JOR. INV. FUND BANK	19.8	0.00	2	520	1610	3.10	3.10	0	-
2,700	1,800	REIT-AL-MAL (BETHNA)	7	12.71	15	2650	3108	1.12	1.18	0.06	+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 195.82	CHNG: +0.75	183	571167	1366094				
3,000	2,800	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.0	5.36	2	1000	2800	2.80	2.80	0	-
2,300	2,100	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.5	0.00	4	11808	25978	2.20	2.20	0	-
4,370	4,370	PHILADELPHIA INSUR.	11.1	0.00	2	20800	89900	4.37	4.55	0.18	+
3,010	2,330	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	9	0.00	4	1764	4110	2.33	2.33	0	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 112.48	CHNG: 0.00	12	34572	122788				
1,820	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.1	5.99	14	5700	9518	1.64	1.67	0.03	+
1,840	1,320	JOINT ELECTRICALITY	8.2	8.33	2	550	756	1.36	1.38	0.02	+
2,780	2,340	JOINT ELECTRICALITY	13.4	5.89	1	200	530	2.70	2.65	0.05	-
6,100	4,100	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	16.9	3.64	2	150	880	5.79	5.50	0.29	-
1,380	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	11	2460	2892	1.15	1.21	0.06	+
1,020	820	REAL ESTATE TRV.	12.1	6.00	1	14999	13049	87	87	0	-
830	480	JORDAN INTL. TRD.	26.2	0.00	1	250	128	51	51	0	-
9,300	4,900	ALRAI	12.5	7.14	1	700	700	7.00	7.00	0	-
7,570	3,900	AD-DUSTOUR	21.3	4.03	6	1600	8265	5.00	5.25	0.25	+
2,050	1,170	MED. EAST HOTELS	19.0	0.00	4	3400	4227	1.23	1.25	0.02	+
3,720	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	7.6	0.00	1	50	146	2.90	2.92	0.02	+
1,220	860	SAHRA INVESTMENT	7.9	0.00	6	2500	2522	1.97	1.97	0	-
2,230	1,630	UNITED TRV.	6.9	6.59	7	15900	26401	1.66	1.67	0.01	+
1,010	650	UNION LUND DEV.	9	0.00	2	900	580	0.65	0.65	0	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 109.98	CHNG: -0.88	61	48869	70591				
4,480	3,580	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	27.1	2.73	22	24399	98166	4.02	4.03	0.01	+
7,050	4,950	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.5	3.01	8	1800	11959	6.62	6.65	0.03	+
10,250	8,720	JOR. PETROLEUM REFINERY	9.4	9.12	8	727	7049	9.65	9.75	0.10	+
7,250	6,000	JORDAN CEMENT	7.5	4.92	2	500	3050	6.10	6.10	0	-
1,250	1,450	INDUSTRIAL CONH. AGR.	9	0.00	5	807	1578	1.96	1.95	0.01	-
7,150	6,400	JOR. WOODSTOCK MILLS	10.2	3.13	1	300	1920	6.40	6.40	0	-
4,000	3,040	ARAB PETROLEUM TRV.	10.4	5.21	11	2187	8390	2.83	2.84	0.01	+
10,250	7,050	ARAB CEMENT WORKS	20.8	4.41	1	100	680	7.05	6.80	0.25	-
5,560	4,250	DAR ALDIAVA DV. INV.	13.5	4.54	13	19400	106803	5.49	5.51	0.02	+
3,850	2,820	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.5	8.97	7	2075	5767	2.80	2.80	0	-
960	450	LIVERFOCK & POLYTR	9.9	0.00	13	15100	7105	4.7	4.7	0	-
1,310	1,020	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	31.8	0.00	11	8900	9186	1.04	1.04	0	-
960	450	LIVERFOCK & POLYTR	9.9	0.00	13	15100	7105	4.7	4.7	0	-
1,330	990	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	2000	1000	54	53	0.01	-
3,330	2,130	NATL. CABLE WIRE TRV.	40.4	0.00	1	200	504	2.52	2.52	0	-
950	650	JOR. STEEL CO.	9	0.00	5	1500	828	55	55	0	-
1,670	1,120	ARAB PETRO. CHEM.	17.7	5.04	10	10600	14674	1.39	1.39	0	-
2,400	1,290	UNIV. MOOR. IND.	8	2.00	16	8800	8835	1.30	1.30	0	-
1,150	820	JOR. WOODSTOCK MILLS	11.1	8	8321	6321	1.11	1.12	0.01	+	
1,600	1,200	NATL. CEMENT	13.8	4.79	5	1650	2409	1.46	1.46	0	-
1,160	840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.6	0.00	9	6610	5617	0.85	0.85	0	-
2,090	1,450	EL-SAYEDY REAR	51.0	0.00	3	750	1088	1.45	1.45	0	-
2,330	1,090	IND. TORALCO	6.3	0.00	2	1200	1380	1.15	1.15	0	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 127.42	CHNG: +0.30	176	136483	366290				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 159.32	CHNG: +0.46	432	771093	1865762				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 22/06/1997											
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH	PART 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
640	350	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	500	195	38	39	0.01	+
700	410	JOR. TRADE FAC.	12.5	0.00	10	10050	4724	4.6	4.7	0.1	+
700	370	ARAB FISH. INVEST.	9	0.00	4	1750	3200	4.0	4.0	0	-
880	730	AL-SHARQ INV. FUND	60.5	0.00	4	16250	8428	7.6	7.7	0.01	+
950	630	AL-DUNAYAN 75%	60.5	0.00	3	2000	760	6.3	6.3	0	-
730	510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	46.4	0.00	6	3113	1713	5.5	5.5	0	-
850	420	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	26.2	0.00	6	3000	1260	42	42	0.01	+
750	400	NATL. MULT. ENG. MANCO	11.5	1.00	28	32950	20216	59	59	0	-
950	500	REAR REAR CONCRETE	33.5	6.78	5	6250	4625	7.3	7.4	0.1	+
580	430	ARAB ELECT. TRV.	8	0.00	2	14000	7000	50	50	0	-
1,220	860	UNION RE. INV. TRV.	9	0.00	6	4500	2925	89	90	0.01	+
880	760	REAR CONCRETE	20.7	0.00	2	92	72	80	79	0.01	-
1,000	810	NAT. ALUMINUM. 75%	9	0.00	3	2750	1568	0.82	0.82	0	-
870	530	MED. EAST COMPLEX	8.0	15.38	3	1050	453	0.65	0.65	0	-
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 114.25	CHNG: 0.00	86	114255	65166				
T : New 12 months high F : New 12 months low L : Listed during the past 12 months P/E ratio is 100 or more + : Positive P/E - : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

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CHIPS

"We don't need to worry about our retirement. I've saved up enough batteries to last until 2025."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Heret Arnold and Mike Argraves

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ZEROF
WONIG
DORPAN
PANPHE

Hand me that wrench!
What?
What the owner wanted the plumbers to do.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GLORY OZONE INDICT EMPLOY
Answer: Husbands will often do this on a fishing trip - DROP A LINE

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Wihdat still not playing, await today's JSF meeting

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite a 70-minute meeting between Al Wihdat's board of directors and His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Regent, the Kingdom's soccer champions made no change on their decision to boycott the Premier League and Jordan Cup contests. Al Wihdat Chairman Bahjat Shihab said Sunday.

The meeting which was also attended by Jordan Soccer Federation's (JSF) members discussed the logjam which resulted from the JSF's decision to change the ticket sales revenue among the Jordanian clubs.

Shihab told the Jordan Times that his club's decision to rejoin the season's contests depends on Monday's JSF meeting which will be headed by Prince Abdullah.

The meeting will discuss Al Wihdat's reservations on the new revenue allocation formula as well as other issues facing the soccer scene.

The new regulations stressed that 28 per cent of the total ticket sales revenue to the clubs which are contesting the match, 35 per cent will be split between the remaining eight clubs in Premier League, 32 per cent will go to the JSF while the remaining 5 per cent will be given to first and second divisions.

Last Thursday, Al Wihdat boycotted their first match of the 1997 Premier League with Al Baqaa, as a result of which some JSF officials threatened that the club might be punished by relegating from the Premier League to first division.

"Our decision was not to defy anybody but we have fair demands and God willing these demands will be met by reviewing our decision," Mr. Bahjat said.

"Prince Abdullah acknowledged our demands. We exchanged views with him and explained our reservations on the JSF's decision regarding the allocation of the ticket sales revenues," Mr. Bahjat, who headed Al Wihdat seven-man team in the meeting, said.

The meeting was also attended by JSF members. Hisham Asfour, Salih Irsheidat and Aqil Baltaji.

Among the issues the JSF is expected to discuss during Monday's meeting will be Al Wihdat's decision to refrain from playing the final match of the Federation Shield, which was scheduled to be held on May 26 but was indefinitely postponed because of Al Faisali's demand to enlist foreign referees for the match against their all-time rivals.

Al Wihdat did not object to the demand but the JSF did not take a decision, which led to the postponement of the match.

Al Wihdat officials then said that they consider their team winner of the Federation Shield according to JSF regulations which state that any club that refuses to play a final match be considered a loser with a 3-0 result.

Arabic dailies hinted Sunday that the "scenario" that would be discussed in the JSF meeting will include holding the Federation Shield final between the two poles of Jordanian soccer without foreign referees and reviewing the JSF's decision by bringing back the old formula of ticket sales.

Three sent off as Argentina bow to Peru

SUCRE, Bolivia (AFP) — Argentina crashed ignominiously out of the Copa America here Saturday, losing their quarter-final to Peru after an ugly encounter in which the Argentines had three men sent off in the final 20 minutes.

It was a shameful end to the Argentine campaign, dogged by outbursts from coach Daniel Passarella against the organisers for allowing hosts Bolivia to remain in La Paz at high altitude after previous assurances that none of the quarter-finals would be played in the capital.

Passarella had threatened to withdraw the squad from the tournament if they were drawn against the Bolivians in the last eight, as at one stage seemed likely. In the end, that didn't happen, but their stay here lasted none the longer as they came up against a determined and skilful Peruvian team instead.

Peru marched into a two-goal lead courtesy of a goal on 30 minutes by Eddie Carazas and Martin Hidalgo scored what proved to be the winner on the hour, before Marcelo Gallardo pulled one back from the spot for the inexperienced



Bolivian forward Sergio Castillo (R) battles with Colombian Luis Morens in their quarter-final match for the Copa America June 21. Bolivia won 2-1 and qualified for the semi-final round (Reuters photo)

Argentine side.

Passarella had been reluctant to bring all his best players to the tournament in case it jeopardised his men's ongoing World Cup qualifying campaign.

But following the goals, what had until then been an entertaining spectacle suddenly turned sour with the dismissal of three Argentineans in scarcely more than ten minutes as Latin tempers boiled over. The former world champions had already missed a penalty just after half-time when Marcelo Gallardo's effort was saved by Miguel Miranda diving to his right.

Having missed that chance to level at 1-1, Gallardo and his teammates lost their heads, as Hidalgo promptly fired

home for Peru's second to add to Carazas' opener.

Although Gallardo redeemed himself by belting home a second penalty after 67 minutes, he then became engaged in an angry altercation with Miranda as he went to recover the ball.

Several other players pitched in and, after a good deal of pushing and shoving, Ecuadorean referee Byron Moreno showed the red card to both Gallardo and teammate Eduardo Berizzo.

Gustavo Zapata joined them for an early bath following a crude foul on 83 minutes to leave Peru to play out the final stages and savour victory, as well as a semi-final tie with either favourites Brazil or Paraguay, who face off

Sunday. Passarella afterwards made a visible effort to contain his anger at the evening's proceedings, saying "we knocked ourselves out."

He blasted both his defence and attack for lapses of concentration which had cost them the match.

"It's difficult to make a snap judgement," said Passarella, who added he in any case wanted to resist saying "something out of place."

He would not be drawn into debating the rights and wrongs of the three dismissals but did say he would have liked to make more than the permitted three substitutions — a clear criticism of the whole team's performance.

Christie overshadows Russian women's dominance

MUNICH (AFP) — Former Olympic and world champion Linford Christie bowed out of the European Cup 100 metres event with his eighth win in the competition from eight starts here on Saturday — overshadowing the dominance of the Russian women.

While the Russian women, on 67 points, were set for a last day duel with Germany (63), the rest trailing over 15 points back, the men's event was very tight with Spain and Russia tied on 52 points, Germany third on 51 and Great Britain fourth on 49.5.

The 37-year-old Christie, who equalled German 400 metres hurdler Harald Schmid's appearance record, led from start to finish to win in 10.04 — the same time he ran in Nuremberg nine days ago against Donovan Bailey, his successor at both Olympic and world titles.

Christie, who has said this is definitely his final bow in a British jersey, came home ahead of long-time European rival Norwegian Geir Moen — the two meet again on Sunday in the 200.

The Englishman then took a lap of honour to a standing ovation, by a crowd put at 29,000 but which looked distinctly smaller.

"I am still the greatest. To receive a standing ovation in any sport is special but the Germans and me appear to have a special relationship. After all, I won my world title in Stuttgart," he said.

He also paid tribute to Sally Gunnell, the former 400 metres world record holder, who stormed to victory in the hurdles event and declared "I'm back!"

"Any athlete who wins like that when the chips are down is different to an ordinary athlete and Sally proved that today," Christie said.

Gunnell, who left the Olympic track in a wheelchair after collapsing with an injury, was the first non-Russian woman to win an event on Saturday.

An early winner for them was Russian triple jumper Inna Lasovskaya saw off British athlete Ashia Hansen.

Hansen, who has beaten the Russian on the Grand Prix circuit this season, failed to capitalise on her lead after the first jump and



Linford Christie of Great Britain concentrates as he pulls on his shirt before the start of the 100 metres sprint at the Athletic Eurocup final in Munich. Christie won the race in 10.04 seconds (Reuters photo)

Lasovskaya won on her second jump with Romanian Rodica Mateescu taking second ahead of the Briton.

It was another disappointment for Hansen, fourth in the 1996 Olympics, who lost out to the Russian in the final jump of the world indoors in March, winning silver to Lasovskaya's gold.

Also victorious was Russian sprinter Natalya Voronova, who served a three-month drug ban in 1994. She won the 100 metres in 11.18sec, beating the fast-finishing German Andrea Phipps.

Voronova, twice sixth in Olympic 100 metres finals, was not the only athlete to be successful after returning from a drugs ban as Germany's grit Breuer won the 400 metres.

Breuer, last in the world indoor championships in March, was banned for first allegedly tampering with a sample which was later reprieved and then served a three-year suspension for clenbuterol — although an altogether safer reason was given for her victory on Saturday.

"It must have been my new aerodynamic hairdo!" she beamed.

Roger Black, who is to succeed Christie as British

captain, dispelled any controversy over his selection in the team by winning the men's 400 metres flat easily from the most difficult outside lane.

The 31-year-old Black, who took silver in Atlanta, has had to see off the challenges of several new youngsters and several pundits felt that it would be better to blood a new man in international competition.

Fernán Cacho of Spain, the 1992 Olympic 1,500 metres champion, showed he was still capable of performing at the top in the event when he took an exciting 1,500 metres — edging home ahead of charging Italian Gennaro Di Napoli.

The most exciting finish of the day was the duel between Gabriela Szabo, the Romanian world indoor 3,000 metres champion, and veteran Italian Roberta Brunet.

Both finished 50 seconds ahead of the third woman home but Brunet was unable to outpace the front-running Szabo in the final 100 metres, a tactic that the Romanian had used to her advantage when overhauling Ireland's Sonia O'Sullivan in Paris in March, losing by just 200ths of a second.

Seles crashes out

EASTBOURNE (AFP) — Defending champion Monica Seles crashed out of the rain-lashed WTA grass-court tournament here Saturday when she lost her quarter-final to big-serving Brenda Schultz-McCarthy 7-5, 7-5.

The match, which had started on Thursday before the weather intervened, resumed with the eighth-seeded Dutch player leading 7-5, 2-2.

Seles clearly already had her mind on next week's Wimbledon tournament, where she will be the second seed behind Martina Hingis.

Schultz-McCarthy finished with a service-winner and an ace and now plays Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the semifinal.

Sanchez Vicario defeated sixth-seed Irina Spirlea of Romania 6-4, 6-4.

Earlier Jana Novotna, who had been just three points from victory when she resumed her rain-interrupted match against Ai Sugiyama of Japan leading 6-3, 5-4 found she had an almighty struggle on her hand.

The sparse crowd, braving the bitter cold conditions and threatening skies, gasped at Novotna's amazing string of errors as she soon served two double-faults and then, having seemingly recovered her poise, netted a simple volley on match-point with Sugiyama helpless after a fall on the slippery court.

The 29-year-old Czech player eventually scored a 6-2, 6-7 (6/8), 6-4 victory.

Sugiyama, 21, and looking forward to her fifth visit to Wimbledon where she reached the fourth-round last year, admitted:

"The conditions were difficult but it was the same for both of us. I am a little disappointed to have lost."

"But now I am looking forward to Wimbledon. It is the tournament I would most like to win. But for the time being my dream is just to play on centre-court."

Novotna now plays Natasha Zvereva of Belarus. Zvereva finished off a three-set win over 1995 champion Nathalie Tauziat of France 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

Rusedski takes grass-court title indoors

NOTTINGHAM (AP) — Greg Rusedski won his first title in Britain Saturday when he triumphed over Karol Kucera in straight sets at the Nottingham Open grass-court tournament.

The trouble was, it was indoors and hardly any of his British fans saw it.

Rusedski, Canadian born but now a British citizen, took just 63 minutes to claim his first ATP Tour title on home soil by winning 6-4, 7-5.

"This is very special," he said. "I have finally won a title for the people in Britain and it's just a great pleasure for me."

The final closed a tournament that had started on grass in sunshine with four of the world's top 20 players. It ended with two unseeded men battling indoors accompanied by the sound of rain beating on the court roof.

The indoor arena was too small to accommodate fans and only a few were able to see the semifinal and final by peering through the windows.

The top three seeds — Carlos Moya of Spain, Marcelo Rios of Chile and Gustavo Kuerten, the French Open champion from Brazil — all lost in the first round.

The fourth seed, Britain's Tim Henman, lost his semifinal match Saturday 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 to Kucera.

Rusedski made the first breakthrough in the final, breaking Kucera's serve at love to take a 3-1 lead.

A string of volleying errors cost him that advantage in the ninth game but he broke back immediately to win the first set.

The second set went with serve until the 12th game when a forehand sent wide of the sideline by Kucera gave Rusedski the match.

Both men had played semifinal matches indoors Saturday. Their quarter-finals were finished indoors on Friday. Rusedski reached the final with a 6-3, 6-4 win over unseeded Australian Sandon Stolle, last year's runner-up.

"I was well prepared on grass so it was tough the first day we had to switch to indoors," Kucera said. "Today I played a good match against Henman so I wouldn't say it was a disadvantage to play inside."

Both men now head for London to open their Wimbledon campaigns next week.

"I have one or two days off now because I play on Tuesday so my preparation's just perfect," Kucera said. His first-round opponent will be big-serving Swiss Marc Rosset.

Rusedski takes on another big server in Australia's Mark Philippoussis, winner of the grass-court event at Queen's Club last week.

"I have a difficult match coming up against Mark," Rusedski said. "I think next week will be a tremendous test for me."

Krajicek too strong for Chang in Rosmalen

ROSMALEN (AP) — Richard Krajicek rallied from a first-set loss to beat top-seeded American Michael Chang 6-7 (7-5), 6-3, 6-4 Saturday and advance to the final of the Heineken trophy.

The third-seeded Krajicek will face 105th-ranked qualifier Guillaume Raoux of France, who stunned Swedish fourth seed Jonas Bjorkman 6-0, 6-1 in the other semifinal.

The women's final had to be suspended at 9:30 p.m. midway through the third set because of persistent rain and was to be completed on Sunday.

No. 3 seed Ruxandra Dragomir led 5-7, 6-2, 3-1 over unseeded Dutchwoman Miriam Oremans before play was abandoned for the day.

On the men's side, Krajicek handed Chang a 6-4 lead in the first-set tiebreak and the American claimed the set on his second chance.

In the second set, Krajicek's serve began to dominate, helping him to a 5-2 lead before rain suspended play.

When they returned, the Dutchman wrapped up the second set with an ace then broke Chang in the fifth game of the final set to finish off the match.

Krajicek served 20 aces in the match to Chang's seven and the American could force only two break points, neither of which he converted.

Chang played with heavily bandaged right thigh, but the injury did not appear to hamper his movement.



Richard Krajicek

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	FLED Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	THE FIRST WIVES CLUB BALTO Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	MAXIMUM RISK Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		

Cash qualifies, Bryan replaces Agassi at Wimbledon

WIMBLEDON (AP) — Ten years after winning the title on Centre Court, Pat Cash qualified for the first round of Wimbledon 1997 Saturday by turning a 3-0 final set deficit against Israel's Oren Motevassel into a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory.

The 32-year-old Australian needed a wild card into the qualifying tournament after his world ranking slipped to 433 because of long periods of inactivity caused by injury. Cash even had his left leg strapped as he went out to play 1-0 down in the final set of a match held over because of rain at Roehampton, near Wimbledon.

After dropping two more games and then held up by three more rain delays, Cash won five in a row and went on to complete

victory in 2 hours 04 minutes.

"I am relieved as much as anything for it is very hard playing in these conditions," he said.

"Yesterday's break for rain was good for me as it gave me time to sort out my calf injury. But this sort of weather is a bit of a leveller. When it is nice, the top players usually get through but, when it is blowing around like this, anything can happen."

The referee's office also announced that American lucky loser Steve Bryan would take Andre Agassi's place in the draw. Agassi, the 1992 titlist, withdrew Friday with a recurrence of a wrist injury and now Bryan will face No. 10 seed Carlos Moya of Spain in the first round.

Inaugural WNBA opens season

INGLEWOOD (R) — The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) tipped off its eight-team, 10-week, 28-game season with three contests Saturday.

The marquee matchup was between the new league's top two markets and featured two of its biggest stars.

U.S. Olympic gold medalists Rebecca Lobo and Lisa Leslie each scored 16 points but Lobo scored

11 of hers in the second half as her New York Liberty scored a 67-57 victory over Leslie's Los Angeles Sparks before 14,284 fans at the forum.

"It wasn't the prettiest of basketball games, but I think we showed a little bit of what we can do," said Lobo after a game that got off to a slow start on poor shooting. "We got a great crowd out here and it can only get better."

Cynthia Cooper scored 25

points as the visiting Houston Comets beat the Cleveland Rockers 76-56 before a crowd of 11,455 at Gund Arena. The Comets played without star forward Sheryl Swoopes, who is awaiting birth of her child.

In the day's final game, Ruthie Bolton-Hollifield scored 11 of her 19 points in the second half when the Sacramento Monarchs pulled away for a 70-60 victory over the host Utah Starzz.

In preparation for Pan-Arab Games Syrian basketball teams conclude visit with decisive wins

By Ajeen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Syria's national basketball teams Sunday concluded their three-day visit to the Kingdom with decisive wins over Jordan in the final friendly matches that come as part of both teams' preparations for the Pan-Arab Games which begin in Beirut July 12-27.

Syria's men beat Jordan 83-69 (39-31) Sunday. They had won the second match 88-81 (32-43) while Jordan had won the opening match 90-78 (41-52).

Syria's women on the other hand won all three of their matches providing a positive indication to their coach and officials of their form before they enter the competition at the Pan-Arab Games in which five teams — Lebanon, Egypt and Tunisia, Jordan and Syria — will contest the women's basketball event.

The Syrians won their last match 58-47 in the most interesting of the three matches and the one that showed that the Kingdom's team were undoubtedly improving from one game to the other. Syria had won the second match 81-52 and the first match 61-43.

The Jordanian players put up big effort, however, they never took the lead and kept trailing their guests while trying to catch up with at least a 7-point difference throughout the

match.

The absence of two players and the fouling out of team playmaker Hala Muheisen took its toll on the team however, Syria also lost the efforts of all-around team leader Elizabeth Mouradian and Rula Zarqa towards the end of the second half.

Syria on the whole appeared to be the better team with fast attacks, coherent teamwork and overall match experience — points the Jordanian team seemed to miss throughout their three matches.

The Kingdom's team clearly played with the added pressure of being evaluated for their upcoming participation which has now bears a question mark.

The team is due to play another three matches against Lebanon before their scheduled departure to Beirut. The lineup is expected to be joined by Jumana Salhi, a key player in the Kingdom, now studying in the U.S.

However, the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) and the Jordan Basketball Federation are expected to issue the final decision on the participation of the men's and women's teams following their showing in the latest matches as a halfway position has been set by the JOC as a prerequisite for participating teams.

A look back at the match



Jordan's Lubna Masri (right) attempts a layup but finds her way blocked by Syria's Hala Wafieh (Photo by Abdullah Ayyoub)

showed Syria opening scoring by Elizabeth Simon while teammates Elizabeth Mouradian, Rula Zarqa, Huda Makul and Amal Sahar scored to take hold of the match at 17-6 and 25-13.

Successful free throw attempts by Rana Hussein and Tala Mauge narrowed the gap to 28-20 in the 18th minute. Zina Farah and Luma Abu Judum combined to score the remaining 7 points for Jordan ending the

first half 34-27 for Syria.

With Hind Ghouri and Tamara Khadra missing the game, Tetyana Qardan rebounded as Hala Khalaf was fouled out early in the second half as Syria held on to a slight lead at 42-35.

However, the Syria's Sahar and Simon outscored Jordan 12-0 to take a 54-35 lead that seemed to end the Jordanian's hopes of catching up.

Although players played hard until the last minute, turnovers, ill-rebounding and no effective scoring were enough to give the Syrians the win at 58-47.

The players attribute their defeat to the lack of match practice and the regrouping of the team only prior to a particular competition.

Players also criticised the fact that they were playing with the pressure of being evaluated for competition in less than two weeks time and not being given the chance to gain experience through participation regardless of the results.

The national team includes Rana Hussein, Hala Muheisen, Sira Naghaway, Hala Ghattas, Lubna Masri, Luma Abu Judum, Tetyana Qardan, Tamara Khadra, Indira Qasesich, Hind Ghouri, Hala Khalaf, Tala Al Mauge, Rania Dajani and Zina Farah.



Baltimore Orioles' Brady Anderson (R) slides safely past the sweeping tag of Toronto Blue Jays' catcher Benito Santiago to score the winning run in the eighth inning of American League baseball action in Toronto, June 21. Anderson scored from second base on a single from B.J. Surhoff. The Orioles beat the Blue Jays 5-1 (Reuters photo)

Indians crush Yanks; Red Sox lose

CLEVELAND (R) — Manny Ramirez says he feels too much pressure battling cleanup, but he drove in a career-high six runs on four hits Saturday as the Cleveland Indians won at home against the New York Yankees for the first time in 21 months, 13-4.

The win stopped the Indians' seven-game home losing streak to New York and Cleveland avoided becoming the first American League team to lose 1,000 times to one opponent.

The Yankees dropped to 13-3 all-time at Jacobs Field and lost there for the first time since September 1995.

Ramirez, who grew up in the shadows of Yankee stadium, drilled his 10th homer of the season and his fifth career grand slam well over the left-field wall in the eighth inning for the final margin.

In Toronto, B.J. Surhoff's two-out, two-run single in the eighth rallied the Baltimore Orioles to a 5-1 victory over the Blue Jays.

The rally against Dan Plesac (0-3) spoiled another stellar outing by Roger Clemens, who allowed four hits and two walks with eight strikeouts in seven innings before giving way to the stifling heat after 103 pitches.

Scott Erickson (10-2) gave up a run and six hits with no walks and two strikeouts in seven innings. Baltimore, which has six two-game losing streaks, is the only Major-League team that has not lost three straight.

In Detroit, Tony Clark went 3-for-5 with a home run and a career-high five RBI as the Tigers pounded the Boston Red Sox 15-4. Damion Easley and Travis Fryman hit back-to-

back homers in the second for the Tigers, who matched their season-high in runs scored.

In Texas, Jay Buhner homered and drove in five runs and Joey Cora and Dan Wilson added three RBI apiece as the Seattle Mariners routed the Rangers 15-8.

In Anaheim, Dave Hollins' run-scoring double snapped a seventh-inning tie and an error by Jose Canseco on the play allowed an insurance run to

score as the Angels defeated the Oakland Athletics for the sixth straight time, 5-3.

In Chicago, Chris Snopce drove in two runs and James Baldwin (4-8) allowed three runs and four hits over 6 1/3 innings as the White Sox scored a 5-3 victory over the Minnesota Twins, who had a three-game winning streak snapped.

Roberto Hernandez pitched the ninth for his 15th save.

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Opening lead: Ten of ♠

The American Bridge Teachers Association gave its 1996 Book of the Year Award to Michael Lawrence's "The Complete Book of Takeout Doubles." Your first reaction might be: How could anyone write a book about a subject as mundane as takeout doubles? Well, there are 222 action-packed pages, and you would have a job counting anything that has been covered. (Available from The Bridge World.)

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Adailton Martins scored six goals as favourites Brazil knocked Asian champions South Korea out of the World Youth Football Championships with a 10-3 drubbing on Sunday.

Ghana qualified for the knock-out rounds from Group C with a narrow 1-0 win over the United States at Alor Setar Stadium and Belgium ended host Malaysia's campaign with a 3-0 victory at the Shah Alam Field.

Martins scored four goals in an eight-minute burst in the first half and pumped in two more in the second to become the leading scorer in the biannual under-20 tournament with nine goals.

His nearest rivals Eduar-do Lillingston of Mexico

and England's Daniel Murphy are way behind on three each.

Fernando Da Costa struck twice and Vinicius Da Silva and Junior Junior also helped themselves to easy pickings as Brazil topped Group B with an all-win record to stay in Kuching till the final.

The final will be played at the 80,000-capacity Shah Alam Stadium on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur on July 5.

The Koreans, who won

the Asian qualifying event, bowed out of the tournament with a solitary point earned from the no goals draw against South Africa.

France and South Africa play later on Sunday to decide the second qualifier from Group B.

France, who have three points to South Africa's one, need a draw to move up. But even a defeat may see them through as one of the four best third-place finishers.

Peter Ofori-Quaye's 33rd

minute goal ensured Ghana moved up in the tough Group C with their second win, giving them seven points.

The United States stayed on three points, the same as Ireland who take on China (one) in their last league match.

Belgium, who had just one point from their first two games in Group A, took a giant stride towards the pre-quarter-finals by defeating the home team.

Gunter Van Handenhoven

led the way with two goals in the first half and Gauthier Remacle completed the tally eight minutes before the final whistle in the uneven contest.

Uruguay (six points) and Morocco (four) were to clash later Sunday to decide the group champions, but Belgium may advance as one of the best third-placed teams.

The Malaysians, who failed to attract crowds even on home soil, lost all their three matches.

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Sharon tipped as Israel's finance minister at hand

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's Ariel Sharon emerged Sunday as the leading contender for finance minister, a job he could exploit to expand Jewish settlement viewed by Washington as an obstacle to peace.

Sources close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Mr. Sharon, 69, was the choice. It would be Mr. Sharon's most senior cabinet post since a 1982 Beirut massacre of Palestinians forced him out as defence minister in 1983.

Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party rival Dan Meridor angrily quit as finance minister last week in a power struggle with the Israeli leader over foreign exchange policy.

Mr. Sharon, now national infrastructure minister, has championed Jewish settlement in governments going back years. In the early 1990s he spearheaded a settlement boom that put Israel on a collision course with its close U.S. ally.

Spokesmen for Mr. Sharon and Mr. Netanyahu would neither confirm nor deny the pending appointment. The only other candidate mentioned was Yaakov Neerman, a former treasury director-general who did a brief turn as justice minister.

While friends of Mr. Sharon touted the warrior-turned-politician for the finance job, analysts and political foes voiced alarm.

"Mr. Sharon will arouse discomfort in the international arena. He will reinforce fear in the Arab World, which will believe

Mr. Netanyahu has built a 'war cabinet,'" warned Maariv newspaper commentator Chemi Shalev.

Yossi Sarid, leader of the leftist Meretz Party in parliament and a former peace negotiator with the Palestinians, said: "Now this most dangerous and extreme man will be in charge of the national order of priorities."

Bankers and analysts expressed concern about Mr. Sharon's long-term economic policy, fearing a hawkish platform and lack of fiscal discipline which could keep foreign investors away.

Paradoxically, Mr. Sharon has not always been on the best of terms with the prime minister. Mr. Netanyahu, 47, reluctantly took the ex-general into his cabinet after elections 13 months ago.

When in 1994 Mr. Sharon launched a brief run for prime minister, Mr. Netanyahu called him "a permanent subversive" although Sunday Mr. Sharon's confidant, politician Eli Landau, said Mr. Sharon had for now abandoned hopes of being prime minister.

Political sources said that since the government had come to power, Mr. Sharon's vast experience stood out at a cabinet table surrounded largely by political neophytes.

His appointment as part of a cabinet reshuffle could receive parliamentary approval Tuesday.

Known in Israel by his nickname "Arik" to friend and foe alike, the burly Mr.

Sharon has a reputation as a bulldozer in any assignment. Mr. Sharon to this day brands Israel's peace partner Palestinian President Yasser Arafat a "terrorist."

In 1983 Mr. Sharon was forced to quit as defence minister after an Israeli inquiry found him indirectly responsible for the killing of hundreds of Palestinians by Christian militiamen at two Beirut-area refugee camps surrounded by Israeli soldiers.

The Lebanon war he led was Israel's most unpopular ever.

Mr. Sharon angered the Bush administration when as part of Israel's most hard-line government from 1990-1992 he spearheaded a settlement drive in the occupied territories. He was snubbed on a 1991 visit to Washington.

Former Secretary of State James Baker wrote in his memoirs that Mr. Sharon's "inflammatory rhetoric and expansionist zeal" had undercut U.S. efforts to find a solution to the decades-old Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Like his settlements policy, Mr. Ariel Sharon was an obstacle to peace," Mr. Baker wrote. The policy prompted President George Bush to hold up \$10 billion in loan guarantees for Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

While in office, Mr. Sharon defended settlements and said their increase had ultimately prompted Israel's Arab enemies to join Middle East peace talks.

Israel's sects sign compromise on 'who's a Jew' controversy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Leaders of the Orthodox and Progressive movements in Judaism signed a compromise agreement with the government Sunday on the emotional issue of who has the right to carry out conversions, officials said.

Under the deal, ultra-Orthodox groups which provide Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with his parliamentary majority agreed to freeze draft legislation which would have formalised their monopoly on conversions to Judaism in Israel.

In exchange, the Reform and Conservative movements which observe a more relaxed form of religious practice, agreed to withdraw a supreme court petition challenging Orthodox rabbis' control over conversions, marriages, divorces and burials inside Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu agreed to form a seven-member commission to find a long-term compromise between the two camps.

The commission must present its findings by August 15 and new legislation is to be submitted to

parliament in September, according to a statement issued by Netanyahu's office.

The dispute, dubbed "who's a Jew" in the Israeli media, has pitted religious and secular parties within government against one another and infuriated Reform and Conservative Jews who make up more than 80 per cent of the influential American Jewish community.

The U.S. movements claimed the draft law, which passed its first reading in parliament earlier this year, would make them second-class Jews. They threatened to cut off donations to the Jewish state which amount to some 230 million dollars per year.

Progressives feared the legislation was simply a first step by the increasingly powerful ultra-Orthodox parties in Israel towards barring recognition of all non-Orthodox conversions, even those carried out abroad.

The dispute came to head in recent months after the interior ministry, which has been controlled by the ultra-Orthodox Shas party since

Mr. Netanyahu's government came to power a year ago, refused to give Israeli nationality to several persons converted to Judaism by Reform or Conservative rabbis.

Domestic political opposition to the draft law was particularly strong from the Israel B'aliya party which is made up mostly of recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union, many of whom have had difficulty gaining Orthodox rabbinical recognition of their Jewishness.

Militant Orthodox Jews have been battling to delegitimise the Reform movements for centuries, seeing them as a stepping stone towards a loss of the Jewish faith and a danger to the survival of the Jewish people.

The Conservative current in Judaism calls for strict observance of most Jewish laws, but allows a modernised practice of the religion, including the reading of services by women and in languages other than Hebrew.

The reform movement is less strict in its application of religious law in daily life.

Saudi says use of sword works against drug trade

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia said its policy of beheading drug smugglers was proving effective in fighting the trade and hoped other Arab and Islamic countries would impose the death penalty on traffickers.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urged the world's countries to collectively work to fight the killer drug problem and expressed its hope that Arab and Islamic countries work to implement the punishment of execution against drug smugglers and pushers," the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said late Saturday.

Its comments were made in a report on an Arab conference on combating drug trafficking in the Arab World.

Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Prince Ahmad Ben Abdul Aziz told the conference in Jeddah that Saudi Arabia considers its implementation of Islamic Sharia law by publicly beheading

convicted murderers, rapists and drug smugglers, "a salvation of humanity from the crime in all its shapes."

"This decisive policy of punishment contributes to deterring those with weak spirits who are after material gains at the expense of the security and safety of our societies," SPA quoted him as saying.

He said the implementation of the death penalty for drug smugglers was instrumental in the fight against drugs coming into the kingdom.

SPA said an Arab study discussed at the conference put the amounts of hashish confiscated in the Arab World between 1994 and 1996 at 208,000 kg, opium 80 kg, heroin 2,386 kg, cocaine 470 kg. It said 163,000 drug smugglers were arrested in the same period, including 8,000 non-Arabs.

Saudi Arabia has so far this year beheaded 54 people.

Moldovan president visits Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — President Petru Lucinschi of Moldova met with Israeli leaders Sunday to sign a series of bilateral cooperation agreements between the former Soviet Republic and Israel.

Mr. Lucinschi held a working lunch with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy at the start of a three-day working visit.

During the luncheon, Moldovan and Israeli officials signed cooperation agreements in the fields of education, civil aviation, science, culture and tourism, a government spokesman said.

Monday Mr. Lucinschi was scheduled to meet with President Ezer Weizman and Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky.



WOMEN PROTEST U.S. EMBASSY MOVE IN ABDOUN: Representatives of Jordanian and Palestinian women's associations Sunday stage a sit-in near the U.S. embassy in Amman to protest a recent Congress decision to transfer the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (see story on page 3) (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

British spark controversy in Iran after appointing expelled diplomat

TEHRAN (AFP) — Britain's appointment of a diplomat who was forced to leave Iran at the height of the Rushdie affair as its new charge d'affaires in Tehran has sparked a fierce debate within the ruling Islamic regime.

The appointment of 49-year-old Nick Browne, the foreign office's head of Middle East affairs, has received considerable comment in the Iranian press since his name was first floated for the post earlier this year.

Mr. Browne served as a junior diplomat at the embassy between 1971 and 1975 during the reign of the Shah, before returning in 1989 to head the British mission.

However, just several weeks later he was forced to leave the country after Britain broke off relations with the Islamic Republic following Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's decision to pass a "fatwa," or religious decree, condemning British author Salman

Rushdie to death for his novel the Satanic Verses.

Mr. Browne's return to Tehran, confirmed by the embassy here, was given enthusiastic approval by the official news agency IRNA which hailed the appointment as a "positive sign" and "an indication that Britain could be pushing for a rapprochement with Iran."

However, the Jomhuri Islamic newspaper, mouthpiece of the Islamist hard-liners within the Iranian government, Sunday condemned Mr. Browne's appointment and called for the authorities to refuse him accreditation.

"Have the officials at the foreign ministry forgotten Nick Browne's links with liberal and weak groups in Iran?" asked the paper.

Mr. Browne has been in the media spotlight since February when Mohammad Javad Larijani, a conservative member of the Iranian parliament and vice chairman of the foreign affairs commission, held talks

with the British diplomat in London.

The radical left-wing Iranian press accused Mr. Larijani of pushing the candidature of Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri for the May presidential elections during the meeting. Moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami won the polls in a surprise landslide victory.

The papers also accused Mr. Larijani of making conciliatory noises over the Rushdie affair to Mr. Browne, pushing the line that Ayatollah Khomeini never intended the death sentence to be carried out by Iranian government. To appease the Europeans, Mr. Larijani, a top strategist here known for his moderate political views, allegedly said the Iranian government would not execute the fatwa, and urged London to help close the file.

His alleged remarks outraged radical left-wing circles, which have also demanded the deputy be stripped of his powers because of the meeting with Mr. Browne. They have called a demonstration against him for Tuesday to demand "adequate action."

The decision by London to replace outgoing Charge d'Affaires Jeffrey James with Mr. Browne coincided with the European Union's decision to recall all its ambassadors in April following a German court ruling implicating Iran's leaders in the murder of Kurdish opposition leaders in Germany in 1992.

Mr. Browne will take up his duties when the European ambassadors return to Tehran, but so far all the EU countries have decided to delay the return until Iran lifts its objections to the German ambassador.

Britain was a major supporter of the monarchy in Iran, and has had strained relations with Tehran since the 1979 Islamist revolution. It is the only European country represented by a charge d'affaires and not an ambassador.

Pride at stake in Iraqi cock fights

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Cock-fighting is a matter of pride in Iraq, where it is classed as a proper sport with strict regulations. In the absence of an official association, fights are organised by amateurs, mostly wealthy tradesmen as well as former boxers and weight lifters.

Fights generally take place on Mondays and spectators pay to watch. Al Tourath cafe, with its arena and photographs of cocks adorning the walls, is a popular venue.

Cock-fighting is a hundred years old in Iraq but the rules were not fixed until 1988. Birds less than a year old are allowed to fight for eight rounds lasting 13 minutes each.

Cocks between one and three years old can enter fights of 10 rounds. Older cocks have to "hang up their gloves."

A "knockout" involves a cock being knocked to the ground and counted out after a minute. A cock also wins if the other escapes or is found to have been doped.

Fights can also end in the death of one of the cocks. A draw is possible if the contestants are exhausted and their owners agree.

Despite the strict rules, referees can find themselves in difficult situations. One referee, Wissam Latif, said he was left with no winners on his hands when one cock was disqualified for fleeing the ring but only after he had flattened his rival who could not get up again.

Saudi court to get proof from heirs in nurses case

DUBAI (R) — Lawyers will Monday offer proof the mother and brother of an Australian nurse killed in Saudi Arabia are her heirs and could demand execution if the alleged killers are found guilty, sources close to the case said.

An Islamic Sharia court called for the proof last week at the fourth session in the trial of two British nurses accused of the crime.

Deborah Parry, 38, and Lucille McLaughlan, 31, are charged with murdering their colleague Yvonne Gilford in December at a medical complex in the eastern city of Dhahran.

"They (the court) already have documentation to that effect and they wanted additional documentation," a source close to the proceedings said Sunday. "This will be forthcoming."

The court adjourned on June 15 and the trial resumes Monday. The Gilfords have not come to Saudi Arabia and are represented in court by the Saudi-based International Law Firm.

Yvonne Gilford was found stabbed 13 times, bludgeoned and suffocated in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex, just days before her 56th birthday.

If the two women are found guilty of murdering Gilford, they may face the death penalty, which in Saudi Arabia is traditionally public beheading by the sword.

The two have said they were forced into making confessions, which they later revoked. Both women say they are innocent.

Legal sources said the question of rightful heirs was one of two critical issues currently at stake. The legal heirs would by Islamic Sharia law enforced in the kingdom have the right to decide for or against execution if the court finds the accused guilty and says capital punishment is the appropriate sentence.

Gilford's brother Frank, who has so far spoken out as the legal heir, has said he favours the death penalty. The victim's 84-year-old mother Muriel suffers from Alzheimer's disease and lives in a nursing home in Australia.

The other issue is Frank's power of attorney, the sources said. The court has refused to accept the power of attorney from the victim's mother to her son "until it is established that the power of attorney was given when Mrs. M. L. Gilford was mentally competent," the defence lawyer Salah Hejailan has said.

The sources close to the case said proof clarifying the power of attorney would also be provided Monday by the lawyers representing the victim's family.

Legal experts said the court was being very careful to ensure procedural due process. "They want whatever result they come to be reliable on the merits and sustainable on the procedures," one said.

The case of the two British nurses has stirred up controversy since they were arrested in December, sparking calls for a more open, public trial.

COLUMN

Russian sex photos minister suspended

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's Justice Minister Valentin Kovalev will be suspended over the publication of photos allegedly showing him cavorting with naked women, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Sunday. "I would not want only to draw conclusions or make a decision based only on the publication," he said, calling the scandal "sad."

"Kovalev is denying everything. But he is a lawyer, he knows how to defend himself. Let him prove it is not like that," he said. Photographs in the sensationalist Sovetskoye Sekretno (top secret) newspaper on Thursday allegedly showed Kovalev, 53, surrounded by naked women at a nightclub described as a haunt of one of Russia's main Mafia groups, the Sotsovo Lads. The newspaper said the photos were from secret video footage taken in September 1995.

Indian men demand safe visits to prostitutes

NEW DELHI (AFP) — More than 250 Indian men gathered in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta Sunday demanding an end to harassment by "police, pimps and local hoodlums" during visits to local bordellos. The Press Trust of India said the protesters — ranging from the very poor to rich businessmen and aged between 23 and 70 — later took part in a discussion on the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The protest for clients' rights was the first of its kind in India, the news agency said. India is set to become the world's AIDS capital, according to U.N. projections, with five million cases by 2000.

Gay MP's boyfriend given privileges of a wife

LONDON (AFP) — The first British MP to declare his homosexuality before he was elected, has secured "wife" privileges for his boyfriend, from the House of Commons. It was reported Sunday, Ben Bradshaw, Labour MP from Exeter, was said by the paper to have won travel concessions and a parliamentary pass for Neal Daglish — normally reserved for married partners — so that Daglish could visit him more easily. The pass also allows Daglish entrance to House of Commons facilities such as restaurants, bars, a gym and a central London car park. Bradshaw is one of three British MPs in the current parliament who have declared their homosexuality.

Porn tax proposal goes down to defeat in California

SACRAMENTO (AFP) — An alliance of porn stars, strippers, adult magazine publishers and film producers, in an unprecedented lobbying effort, have defeated a proposed state tax on pornographic materials. About 50 representatives of California's booming adult entertainment industry waged an all-out campaign in the state capital that climaxed last week with a 5-0 committee vote to reject the proposed five per cent sales tax. "Taxing any form of entertainment is very, very dangerous," said Ron Jeremy, the 44-year-old veteran of 1,400 hardcore films including "Deep Throat II" and "John Bobbitt uncensored." "Where do you draw the line?" asked Jeremy, who said numerous senators and assemblymen recognised him but did not let on. Over the two-day lobby effort, actress Shyla Foxxx was dispatched to assemblyman Scott Baugh's office where she spent minutes educating the lawmaker in industry realities.